

**Wisdom: Maximal Living, Minimal Damage:  
(or Living a Life of Wisdom: 3 Moral Laws of Wisdom).  
Proverbs 8:35-36**

By Paul R. Shockley  
www.prshockley.org

“One-half of the ills of life come because men are unwilling to sit down quietly for thirty minutes to think through all the possible consequences of their acts.” ~ Blaise Pascal.

“May not the inadequacy of much of our spiritual experience be traced back to our habit of skipping through the corridors of the Kingdom like children through the marketplace, chattering about everything, but pausing to learn the true value of nothing?” ~ A.W. Tozer, *The Divine Conquest*.

**1 Kings 3:4:14 (Scripture Reading)**

<b>I. INTRODUCTION:</b>
-------------------------

Wouldn't it be great if I could live any way I wanted to live, and not suffer from the wounds of wickedness?

Such a question was asked by Dorian Gray, the main character in Oscar Wilde's famous work, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. One day in London, Dorian Gray's portrait was being painted. Dorian Gray, a young handsome man with a noble reputation, with financial means, and a disposition of untested innocence, raises this question, after a particular English Lord, a man who took pleasure in watching the demise of others, esp. in view of his life of idleness and boredom, stirred up sinful desires that laid dormant in Dorian's frail human nature-by engaging him in conversation. His request to live anyway he wanted to live, and not suffer from the wounds of wickedness was granted and in a magical moment, a curse, Dorian was given physical immortality. Thus, intoxicated by the possibilities, Dorian joined the deceptive lord in the pursuit of moral wickedness. But with every experience of sinful pleasure, came the law of diminishing returns. Thus, step-by-step he followed deeper and deeper into debauchery. While Dorian did not physically change, every time he sinned, the portrait revealed what he really looked like. So, with every sin committed, Dorian's portrait looked *more* distorted, twisted, and vile.

The years passed. Dorian Gray looked as youthful as the day he was originally painted. But he developed appetites for profound wickedness. Gray's reputation had fallen and rumors grew of his depraved ways. Then one day, his painter, an old man now, runs into Dorian Gray. After seeing the painting, the painter realized what happened. There, he pleaded with Dorian to turn to God... "though your sins be as scarlet, they could be white as snow." Dorian responded to the invitation of receiving grace by killing the painter. He then turned to the painting and decided to destroy it lest anyone else finds out what happened. At the moment he stabbed the painting, he stabbed himself. Thus, he died and immediately turned into a rotting corpse whereas the painting was restored to its original depiction.

We don't have to read fictional literature to know that sin is always crouching at the door: We see the temptations wherever we are: The TV, the computer, the billboards, the i-phone, employment, and even within our own frailties.

A young man I've been close to for several years recently made a decision to live a life of consecration... to be sold out to Jesus Christ. He had come to an awakening, a realization, that

when he lives unto God, He is truly free. He said his former mindset as a carnal worldly Christian was that he wanted to be free from pursuing God because he wanted to be free to live it up. But he came to the realization that when he attempted live it up apart from God, he was not free. Rather, he became victim of his own sinful choices and fleshly appetites. In fact, he said he was a fool!

What is a fool? He wasn't saying that he was unintelligent, thus unaware of what he was doing. He was also not saying that he lacked the ability to be cautious in speech (Prov. 18:6-7).

No, he was saying that he had pursued courses of conduct or action that ultimately proved to be harmful (2 Sam. 24:10); He said that he had committed himself to insidious actions as one who knew God's Word, but against them (Jeremiah 29:23; 2 Sam. 13:11-14). He deliberately and with calculated premeditation, followed a lifestyle that was detrimental to not only himself but others in his sphere of influence. In essence, he attempted to live the way he wanted to live, apart from fellowship with God, and to live it his way-without seriously considering the consequences that would follow. Such actions and lifestyles can be described as foolishness or folly. In the Bible these characteristics stem from the lack of a proper relationship with God.<sup>1</sup>

But his foolishness is not unique. His foolishness, unfortunately, is all-too common. We see it in ourselves when we purposefully yield to sin, rather than to God; when we choose a course of action that is not God's very best for us; when we raise our fists in rebellion against God, we are foolish.

But what is not common these days, even among us, if we are brutally honest, are those who proactively pursue wisdom.

But what is wisdom?

1. "Wisdom is the God-given ability to see life with rare objectivity and to handle life with rare stability."<sup>2</sup>
2. "Wisdom is the ability to see with discernment, to view life as God perceives it. Understanding is the skill to respond with insight. Knowledge is the rare trait of learning with perception-discovering and growing."<sup>3</sup>
3. "Wisdom is skill in the art of living life with each component under the dominion of God."<sup>4</sup>

Some of think that wisdom is just plain, simple obedience; it is only applied knowledge! But that is not whole picture. Wisdom is not merely simple obedience. No, wisdom is the ability to direct your mind toward both a full understanding of human life and toward its moral fulfillment.

Let me illustrate this way. If a man is trained in how to remove a defective catalytic converter out of only one type of car, and puts a new one on the same make of car every time, we would admit that he has knowledge and we would add that he can apply that knowledge. However, we would not go

---

<sup>1</sup>Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary*. Includes index. (1st ed.) (317). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

<sup>2</sup> Chuck Swindoll, *Living on the Ragged Edge*.

<sup>3</sup> Chuck Swindoll, *The Strong Family*.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Boa, "Leadership Qualities: Wisdom" by Dr. Kenneth Boa: [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

so far as to call him a wise mechanic until he had a thorough understanding of multiple cars, how one engine part interacts with another, how to diagnose various problems when they arise, and how the vehicle is impacted by driving conditions. In other words, he understands the system and its order of operation. Any amateur willing to devote himself to the wise mechanic's tutelage, will glean wisdom himself.

Wisdom is pro-actively fulfilling your God-given design, really understanding the person you are under His rulership. In fact, wisdom is truly seeing and living out the mindset that God is both your starting point and your termination point. As Proverbs 1:7 states: "*The fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" As my young friend came to realize: the reverence of God—lay behind every aspect of wisdom. In fact, paraphrasing a statement from O.T. scholar, John Hilber, *wisdom is conforming one's life to the Creator's design.*<sup>5</sup>

This morning I'm going to present to you three truths from God's Word that should impact your life. These three truths or moral laws of wisdom are not only good for your life, but should impact the choices you make and the values you embrace. In fact, I refer to them as moral laws of wisdom, moral laws that are to be recognized and followed. In fact, once we come to recognize these fundamental truths, knowing how they are to be applied in this unwise world will become clearer.

For some of you, I suspect this morning will be liberating because you chronically struggle with decision-making. For others, it is decision-time. Will I continue to live foolishly, or will I be resolved to live wisely? And still, unfortunately, some of us will walk away from these truths because you still think that living on your terms is the best road to take. But I invite you to consider these three truths. If we will inculcate them, that is, inscribe them upon our hearts, our minds, fostering a change of appetites and habits, all unto dependency upon the Holy Spirit, then we will live meaningful, fulfilling lives, *walk safely wherever we go; our feet will not stumble, and when we lie down at night, we will not be afraid; yes, we will be able to lie down at night and our sleep will be sweet* (Proverbs 3).

Therefore, please turn your Bibles to Proverbs 8:32-36. As you turn there, let me stress the purpose of wisdom as found in this book of Proverbs-as it relates to us.

Kenneth Boa perhaps states it best when he says:

...in the book of Proverbs, we are viewed as... raw material. We are valuable, but unshaped, worthwhile but undisciplined. We are precious but given to waywardness. We do not have within us the ability to take the raw material of our lives and shape into the lifestyle our Creator desires us to live. Solomon selected the Hebrew word *boema* to describe the quality needed by anyone who wanted to live life in the superlative—a life of excellence.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the entire theme of the book of Proverbs is to pursue wisdom. As we pursue God, he makes us wise.

---

<sup>5</sup> John W. Hilber, "Old Testament Wisdom and the Integration Debate in Christian Counseling," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155:620 (October-December 1998):422.

<sup>6</sup> [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org).

II. EXPOSITION:
-----------------

“Now therefore, listen to me, *my children*,  
For blessed *are those who* keep my ways.

<sup>33</sup> Hear instruction and be wise,  
And do not disdain *it*.

<sup>34</sup> “Blessed is the man who listens to me,  
Watching daily at my gates,  
Waiting at the posts of my doors.

<sup>35</sup> For whoever finds me finds life,  
And obtains favor from the Lord;

<sup>36</sup> But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul;  
All those who hate me love death.”<sup>7</sup>

*“Now, therefore, listen to me, my children:*

**A. Context (Read selected passages before comments):**

1. Immediately we are faced with a “*therefore*.” The “***Therefore***”, takes back to verse 1: What we see if we look at Proverbs 8 from a bird’s eye perspective, 5 major units of thought become apparent. As we look at these units of thought, what we will see in Proverbs 8 is that ***wisdom is depicted figuratively as a personification of God’s wisdom. What I mean by personification is that wisdom is being viewed as a person for literary purposes.***
2. In sum:
  - a. Anyone can receive wisdom: it is calling out to anyone who listens: vv.1-4;
  - b. Wisdom is of greater value than silver and gold: vv. 6-11;
  - c. You will receive plenty of rewards if you welcome wisdom vv. 12-21;
  - d. Wisdom is associated with creation: vv. 22-31:
  - e. Then vv. 32-36 is a concluding appeal that if we will pursue wisdom we will be blessed.

*Let’s look more closely at Proverbs 8 beginning at verse*

3. **vv. 1-4** reveals a call to wisdom:
  - a. We see the call to wisdom: Wisdom, like a virtuous woman, is seen in the streets, where people are, offering her services of right thinking for skilled living-to all those who will receive her. She stands at the hilltops, the intersections, and the gates, where court cases were heard and business conducted. This stands in contrast to the adulterous woman in Proverbs 7 who attempts to entice young men into shame and death or the woman in Proverbs 9 called Folly (9:13).

*A transition occurs in verses 5-31:*

---

<sup>u</sup> Prov. 3:13, 18.

<sup>7</sup>The New King James Version. 1982 (Pr 8:32-36). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- b. In verses 5-31 wisdom speaks. Calling out to the foolish and the simple, that is, those who need her the most, she says: I will speak of excellent things. From the opening of my lips will come right things. Why? Wisdom, once again, which is being personified figuratively, is an attribute of God.
4. **vv. 6-11:** Receiver her for her qualities are of greater value than anything one can buy. Receive her instruction and knowledge for she is greater in value than silver and gold.
  5. **vv. 12-21:** If you make wisdom your focus, then you will receive plenty of rewards:<sup>8</sup>
  6. **vv. 22-31:** Wisdom and creation. As Creator, God counted wisdom most important. Wisdom is older than the universe, and it was essential in its creation. Nothing came into existence without wisdom. Wisdom leads to joy because creation produces joy (vv. 30-31) both for the Creator and for the creature. God made and did nothing without wisdom. Therefore it is very important that we obtain it.
  7. Because of wisdom's unique role she makes a final plea for people to acquire her we back to **vv. 32-36.**
- B. Now, as we investigate vv. 35-36, here in Proverbs 8 we see three moral laws of wisdom:
1. Whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord (8:35)
  2. He who sins against God wrongs his own soul (8:36a)
  3. All those who hate me love death (8:36b)

What we will see as we examine these passages more closely is that these moral laws of wisdom are fixed. If you violate them, you will suffer. But if you follow them, you are blessed. There are no exceptions or exemptions. Why? Not only is wisdom related to the pursuit of a lifestyle of proper ethical conduct in the book of Proverbs, esp. the practical skills of coping with life, but Proverbs 8 reveals that it is in God (verse 22), from everlasting (vs. 23), and is before all things (vv. 23-30). In

- 
- <sup>8</sup>
1. You will prudence, knowledge, discretion (vv. 12-13)
  2. Verse 13 shows that wisdom is moral as well as mental. One who fears the LORD (see comments on 1:7) and therefore is wise will hate (reject) evil (cf. 3:7; 14:16; 16:6, Ps. 97:10), pride . . . arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse talk.
  3. Verses 14-16 reveal that wisdom enables people to give wise counsel and sound judgment, and to have understanding (insight) and power (i.e., valor). Wisdom makes a person courageous like a soldier of valor. Kings . . . rulers . . . princes, and nobles who rule well do so by God's wisdom; they make laws that are just. In contrast, those who don't make fair law demonstrate that they lack God's wisdom.
  4. Verses 17-18: Wisdom, available to all, is acquired only by those who love her (cf. v. 21; 4:6) and seek her (cf. 2:1-4). Those who are wise receive riches and honor (cf. 3:16), enduring wealth (cf. 8:21; 14:24; 15:6; 22:4), and prosperity. "Enduring" is literally "surpassing" or "eminent." The riches that come to the possessor of wisdom are genuine, not artificial substitutes purchased with silver or gold. Being honored in a community is a product of one's walk (conduct) rather than one's wealth by itself. "Prosperity" is literally "righteousness" (cf. v. 20). Godly living is the major benefit from having wisdom.
    5. vv 19-21. The word yield (v. 19) is a term used in the marketplace; the verb focuses attention on wisdom's ability to produce benefits far superior to what fine gold (*hārûš*; cf. v. 10) and silver provide. Wisdom goes with righteousness and justice (cf. v. 8). The form of the Hebrew verb walk conveys the idea of walking steadily or continuously.

Notes adapted from *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, "Proverbs".

fact, if you look at wisdom literature as whole, books such as Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs, you find that wisdom is not only identified with God's instruction (Ecclesiastes 24;23), it is as seen as belonging properly to God (Job. 28).<sup>9</sup>

<p><b>C. The First Law of Wisdom: <sup>35</sup>For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord;</b></p>
--

Since God is the origin and source of wisdom, if you pursue wisdom, you will find life and obtain favor from the Lord.

Looking more closely at this verse:

1. **“Whoever”** reaffirms the earlier idea that wisdom is calling out to anyone who listens. It is an open invitation. It is available to anyone; no matter who you are, regardless of your past, wisdom is calling out to you. There are no favorites.
2. **“Life”** implies success or completeness. We might think that life refers to eternal life. To be sure, it does, but it is much more than simply eternal life. When you live out your life the way God intends by yielding to God's wisdom, then your spiritual life matures; you become complete.
3. Moreover, if God desires us to receive His very best, following His ways leads to living life to the fullest. In other words, following God's wisdom leads to an outstanding life, to a life well-lived. **Why? Let me give three reasons why: Wisdom is supreme, wisdom pays, and wisdom leads God to take pleasure in you. Let's further unpack these three reasons:**
  - a. **First reason why wisdom leads to an outstanding life, to a life well-lived is because wisdom is supreme:**

**Listen, my sons, to a father's instructions; pay attention... Do not forsake my teaching.... Get wisdom, get understanding.... Do not forsake wisdom.... Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost you everything you have, get understanding..... Accept what I say.... I guide you in the way of wisdom. Proverbs 4:1-11.**

Another way of looking at it is by consider the striking words of observation by Augustine:

Sin arises when things that are a minor good are pursued as though they were the most important goals in life. If money or affection or power are sought in disproportionate, obsessive ways, then sin occurs. And that sin is magnified when for these lesser goals we fail to pursue the highest good and the finest goals.

So, when we ask ourselves why, in a given sense, we committed a sin, the answer is usually one of two things. Either we wanted to obtain something we didn't have, or we feared losing something we had.

---

<sup>9</sup>Achtemeier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). *Harper's Bible dictionary*. Includes index. (1st ed.) (1135). San Francisco: Harper & Row.

**b. Second reason why wisdom leads to an outstanding life is because wisdom pays:**

**Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; 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 pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay of hold of her will be blessed. Proverbs 3:13-18.**

1. We agree intellectually that wisdom is more valuable than money or status. But what if we were to pursue with the same vigor that we pursue money? What if we were to pursue wisdom with the same passion we pursue our hobbies, our investments, and some of our relationships?
2. Or consider it this way: Every event in your life is not neutral; they are God-given opportunities to gain wisdom. In the words of Malcolm Muggeridge, *“Every happening, great and small, is a parable whereby God speaks to us, and the art of life is to get the message.”*
3. Rather than just learning from our bad choices, if we will seek wisdom now, then we will seek to understand, intimately know, and heed God Word’s in our daily lives as an expression of worship to Him, we will have the right kind of wisdom from the start. This pays dividends. Why? Because-wisdom is supreme.

**c. Third reason why wisdom leads to an outstanding life, a life well-lived is that by pursuing God’s wisdom leads God to take pleasure in your choices. Once again, consider verse 35:**

<sup>35</sup> ***For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord;***

Like God in dealing with King David, God delights in those who pursue Him.

To me, this is so beautiful.

1. As a believer in Jesus Christ, you are accepted by God. In fact, I go back to this statement I once read to you by J.I. Packer; it found in his classic work, *Knowing God*:

What matters supremely, therefore, is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact that underlies it-that He knows me. I am graven on the palm of His hands. I am never out of His mind. All my knowledge of Him depends on His sustained initiative in knowing me. I know Him because He first knew me, and continues to know me. He knows me as a friend, one who loves me; and there is no moment, therefore, when His care falters. This is momentous knowledge. There is unspeakable comfort... in knowing that God is constantly taking knowledge of love me in love and watching over me for my good. There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now

can disillusion Him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench His determination to bless me.

2. But when you live for Him as a believer, by living out His truths His ways, God takes pleasure in what you do as a father delights in a son or daughter who honors him. So, the word “favor” refers to a state or condition of approval, implying pleasure in the event (Ex 28:38).<sup>10</sup>

***First law of wisdom is if you pursue wisdom, you will find life and obtain favor from the Lord. The second law of wisdom is this:***

<b>D. Second Law of Wisdom: <sup>36a</sup> But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul.</b>
--

1. When you sin against wisdom, you wound your own soul.
  - a. In fact, the word “*wrongs*” or “*wounds*” or “*injures*” means to “*treat violently*.”<sup>11</sup>
  - b. Like Dorian Gray, when you sin against God’s wisdom, you commit violence against your own person, both physically and ethically.
  - c. To be sure, if you are a believer, you have eternal life. But you if you scorn, neglect, abuse God’s instruction, you wreak havoc upon the quality of your life.
  - d. It is absolutely foolish to think that you get away with sinning and not suffer for it.<sup>12</sup>
  
2. As I’ve reflected upon Scripture and observed the lives of believers who rebel against wisdom, I’ve noticed a certain pattern of degeneration. It seems that this degeneration typically involves 8 downward steps.
  - a. CONFUSION
  - b. CONTAMINATION
  - c. CORRUPTION
  - d. FRAGMENTATION
  - e. AMBIGUITY
  - f. DECEPTION
  - g. LOSS OF IDENTITY
  - h. IRRELEVANCE

<sup>10</sup>Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.) (DBLH 8356, #2). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>11</sup> Eight occurrences of the word “*treat violently*”: AV translates as “... violence” twice, “violated” once, “shake off” once, “wrongfully imagine” once, “violently taken away” once, “wronged” once, and “made bare” once. I to wrong, do violence to, treat violently, do wrongly. **1a (Qal) to treat violently, do wrong. 1a1 of physical wrong. 1a2 of ethical wrong. 1a3 of physical and ethical wrong.** 1b (Niphal) to be treated violently [The word “wrongs” is verb, qal, active, pure verb participle, singular, masculine, normal].

<sup>12</sup>Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (H2554). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

**(1)** When a believer doesn't immediately flee from sin, the intoxicating effects of sin will breed spiritual confusion. If confession of sin doesn't soon take place (1 John 1:9), then contamination spreads.

Like a weed in a garden, the contamination will begin to spread as you come to develop an appetite for that sin. Once the appetite becomes significant, spiritual corruption will set in.

Your thirst to fulfill that sinful appetite will begin to grow, altering your priorities...as if it is growing deep roots & spreading seeds across your garden. Corruption eventually leads to fragmentation; the garden becomes thicker and thicker with weeds to the extent that your garden is broken up; there is no continuity.

Fragmentation occurs because you have betrayed your new identity in Jesus Christ.

Spiritual fragmentation leads to ambiguity. At this level you no longer recognize who you are in Christ - just like your garden is no longer recognizable as a garden.

Ambiguity leads to deception. Deception occurs when what you originally rejected you now embrace & what you originally embraced you now mock & scorn; your theological beliefs, values, & duties are turned upside down.

When deception sets in, you've lost your God-given identity-representation (e.g., you have lost His authority, distinctiveness, purpose/vision, & unique witness to the world).

When you've lost your identity, then you become irrelevant - for your life will not count for something great (1 Cor. 3; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; 2 John 8). At this stage you draw your resources, ideas, & practices from the secular world, the flesh, & the counterfeit kingdom...rotting sources that will one day be destroyed. Your explanatory power as a believer in Jesus Christ is gone (Heb. 6).

**(2)** But there is always hope while you have air to breathe - if you are a believer in Jesus Christ, one who has come to receive the free gift of salvation by placing your trust in Jesus, who is God & died on the cross for your sins & rose bodily from the dead (John 3:16). Draw near to God & He will draw near to you. Sincerely confess your sins (1 John 1:9) & yield to God.

Yielding is not merely a decision, but a qualitative life of consecration. But it is not merely consecration. It also involves an on-going separation from the world. But it is not merely separation from the world, but an on-going transformation by the renewing of the mind with the Word of God (Romans 12:1-2). Remember, no matter what choice (s) you have made, Jesus Christ is always present, always sufficient, & always necessary; turn to Him. If you do, then you will experience a liberated conscience & a disposition of joy, peace, strength, and thankfulness. The wonder of Calvary will become beautiful to you once more & you will begin a new journey that will restructure your character in conformity to our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ as you deal with the consequences of your sin with God's abiding & enduring strength.

**(3)** Thus, every time you sin, no matter how pleasurable it is you are rejecting wisdom. If you are rejecting wisdom, a marring and scarring of sin always takes place. Moreover, at all stages, I've observed that there is the possibility that you might turn to apathy.

Regardless if it is apathy or allowing this particular sin to develop into an appetite, appetite into identity, & identity into irrelevance, at all levels you "open the door" for God to chastise you (Heb. 12:1-2). If you don't respond to chastisement, then He will scourge you. If scourging does not foster repentance, then He might take you on home.

Other than considering the violence that occurs when you reject wisdom, there is pain when you realize that the violence you have committed against yourself could have been avoided. F. B. Meyer puts it this way:

This is the bitterest of all—to know that suffering need not have been; that it has resulted from indiscretion and inconsistency; that it is the harvest of one’s own sowing; that the vulture which feeds on the vitals is a nestling of one’s own rearing. Ah me! This is pain! There is an inevitable Nemesis in life. The laws of the heart and home, of the soul and human life, cannot be violated with impunity. Sin may be forgiven; the fire of penalty may be changed into the fire of trial: the love of God may seem nearer and dearer than ever and yet there is the awful pressure of pain; the trembling heart; the failing of eyes and pining of soul; the harp on the willows; the refusal of the lip to sing the Lord’s song. F. B. Meyer in Charles Swindoll, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, p. 246

**D. Third Law of Wisdom: “All those who hate me love death” vs. 36b.**

1. “**All those**” (there is no exception) who hate me” The word “*hate*” is used here to mean enemy, an adversary. So, the idea is all those who hate wisdom are those who are openly hostile to wisdom like a person who is openly hostile to his enemy.<sup>13</sup>
2. The word “**love**” refers to an affection that one has for a family member; it is also used to refer to proper romance, or attraction.<sup>14</sup>
3. The word “**death**” refers to dying prematurely by neglect of wise moral conduct.<sup>15</sup>
4. So, we could re-translate this passage to say that all those who are an open adversary to wisdom are romancing death by means of ethical conduct.
  - a. **One of my best friends told me that this verse is the reason why he no longer has a TV in his home. There was too much open hostility to God’s wisdom. Since his children do not have discernment to know better, I thought it would be better to get rid of it rather than allow it shape their children’s affections.**

E. In sum, wisdom is the skill in the art of living with every facet of life under God’s authority. Moral laws of wisdom are part of the moral order of the universe; just as there is a physical order of the universe, I contend that there is a moral order. This moral order involves at least three truths we see throughout Scripture. In Proverbs 8 we see this moral order manifested with wisdom itself.

4. Whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord (8:35)
5. He who sins against God wrongs his own soul (8:36a)
6. All those who hate me love death (8:36b)

<sup>13</sup>Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.) (DBLH 5383). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible: Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (H4191). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

How you respond to wisdom is a matter of life or death; it is impossible to be neutral.

What you see with these moral laws of wisdom is that if you pay attention to the way God has constructed reality, reality being *what actually is*, is that it makes your decision-making easier in the *particulars* because these three moral laws of wisdom function *like* rules of nature. Once we understand them and how they operate, decision-making becomes easier. Wisdom is more than doing what we've been told. Wisdom is more than simple obedience; wisdom is studying to understand God and His moral order of things. Therefore, always do what will glorify God the most; remember that when you sin, you commit violence against your own person, and if you are openly hostile to God's wisdom, you are literally *romancing* premature death.

### III. IN CONCLUSION: HOW SHOULD WE THEN LIVE?

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup> But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. <sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>*The New King James Version*. 1982 (Jas 1:5-8). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.