

299.1: Knowing, Practicing, Becoming (OT Gospel Doctrine Lesson 31, Updated)  
[“Happy Is the \[One\] That Findeth Wisdom”](#)

1. Framing
2. Reading Review
3. What is wisdom? (including the relationship to knowledge and transformation) I’ve heard the summary “being able to learn from another’s mistakes is wisdom” Wisdom is passed from generation to generation, enables us to have a headstart as we try to figure out our own lives.
4. Discussion: What are some of the most important life lessons you could share? (Acceptance, respect, let go of control, Serenity Prayer, power of matter-of-factness, differentiation in relationships)
5. What are some of your favorite Proverbs or sayings? “memes”! (Buckminster fuller quote), think outside the box, work within the box, change the box as possible.
6. The beginning of wisdom: an appreciation for how things work, including humans and reality
7. Virtue ethics: becoming worthy
8. Modern wisdom literature

Productive Sunday School (What life wisdom do you want to share?)

Framing

Wisdom is one of the topics I am most passionate about—the path to well-being. Of course, wisdom isn't enough:

Reading Review

Wisdom: Hokhma in Hebrew and Sophia in Greek, foundation of ancient education

Class Member Reading:

1 Kings 4:32 Solomon was known for his proverbs (mashal, analogy, comparison) and songs.

Proverbs 1:7 A “fool” is one who is not stupid, but rather morally deficient, someone not prone to make good/wise choices. Important point to remember.

9:9-10 Reverence/respect “fear” of the Lord is the beginning of understanding

3:5-7 Trust in the Lord, don’t rely on our own understanding

16:27-28 bad people do badly

18:8 Gossip penetrates (there is also a theory language exists for gossip)

25:18 Speaking badly of others is violence

13:10 it is wise to take advice (learn from the mistakes of others!)

16:18 Pride precedes destruction

22:6 We follow the patterns of our childhood “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

15:13 Our faces show our emotions

17:22 Our emotions impact our health

2 Nephi 9:28-29 We are foolish when we think we are wise, but as long as we can follow the gospel, learning is good

Matthew 12:36-37 Our words will judge us

D&C 68:25-28 Parents should teach principles of the gospel to their children

Additional Reading: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (The Student Guide says to “study as much of the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as you can”)

From Adam Miller’s *Nothing New Under the Sun: A blunt paraphrase of Ecclesiastes*

of an eye. We can’t hope to understand a fraction of what God sets in motion.

What’s to be done? You certainly can’t win. Let that idea go. So sit awhile. Let your disappointment root you. Let it direct your attention to what’s passing away right in front of you. Don’t object to the little joys that accrue just because they aren’t the big joys you wanted. Eat, drink, and enjoy your work for its own sake. Let what is given be a grace.

God’s work will last forever. Nothing can be added to it. Nothing can be taken from it. We can’t amend it. God knows that the magnitude of his work makes us tremble. So tremble. Whatever exists now has already been and whatever exists in the future will be more of what we have now. God, eternal, will go on doing again what he’s already done before.

We, too, keep repeating ourselves. But we keep repeating the same mistakes—the same acts of selfishness, the same pettiness and hypocrisy, the same prejudices and inequalities—so that justice keeps getting displaced by special interests. The futility of it makes my eyes cloud with anger. Let God judge us already! Let the season for balancing these accounts come! Let the consequences follow hard upon our deeds!

More, let my own vanity be unmasked! It’s for my own good that God will, inevitably, reveal to me the animal that I am. This is the bald truth: I

am an animal. My fate is the same as every other animal. Every living thing is dying. And so am I. I am dying. All living things breathe in the same air. And all living things breathe it back out. No one can keep it. Wind can’t be kept. Humans have no advantage, here, over anything else. Life is short and unsatisfying and then we die. We all came from dust and we all return to it.

Despite what they say, no one knows what happens—if anything—after we die. Our fate may be no different than any other animal. This life may be all there is. Not knowing, it’s better to stop fantasizing about some great reward and, instead, learn to love our work for its own sake.

Other Reading: None

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Knowledge (knowing what works/is right)

Wisdom (knowing how to apply what works/is right)

Practice (being able to apply what works/is right)

Character (becoming someone who applies what works/is right)

Gospel path: Knowing, Practicing, Becoming.

Discussion: What are some of the most important life lessons you could share? (Acceptance, respect, let go of control, Serenity Prayer, power of matter-of-factness, differentiation in relationships)

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The beginning of wisdom: an appreciation for how things work, including humans and reality

Virtue ethics: becoming worthy

Modern wisdom literature

Comment on Asher delightedly commenting on my books "You are not so smart" and "you are now less dumb" "Wisest one in the room" (Look through the ToC/summaries of these)

School of Life, Alain de Botton

Practical Wisdom, Barry Schwartz

<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/barry-schwartzs-practical-wisdom/>

The source of the idea... is Aristotle. Aristotle was famous for being what's called a virtue theorist. That is, the way you create good societies is by creating good people, and the way you create good people is by instilling in them the virtues. He had his own list of what the virtues are, and our list would be different from his, but the point is he thought that good societies depend on people of good character and that good character is something that can be trained.

He had a big list of virtues, but he thought there was one particular virtue that was the master. That one he called practical wisdom. The reason was that courage is a virtue, but you can be too courageous. Then we don't call it courage anymore; we call it recklessness. So what's the

right amount of courage? That requires wisdom. Honesty is a virtue. But so is kindness. Often you find yourself having to decide whether this is a situation that calls for honesty or one that calls for kindness. What enables you to figure that out? Wisdom is what enables you to figure that out.

For him, the way one scholar put it, these virtues are running around like unruly schoolchildren, and wisdom is what creates order out of this chaos and actually helps people to find what he called the mean, the right amount appropriate for this person and this situation. All we did in the book was try to take Aristotle's ideas and translate them into a language that makes sense in the 21st century and apply them to the kinds of institutions and problems that we face in modern developed societies, as opposed to ancient Athens.

Martin Seligman, Character Strengths and Virtues:

<http://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4317046.aspx?tab=2>

Wisest One in the Room, Thomas Gilovich and Lee Ross

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/scientific-american-mind-reviews-the-wisest-one-in-the-room/>

Wisdom is defined by Gilovich and Ross as having insight into others, having a good sense of judgement, and being able to understand other peoples' perspectives and motives.

The book sparkles with examples, but here are just three: If you want people to develop a genuine interest in something, give them only small rewards for their participation; big rewards get people more interested in the rewards than in the activity. If you want people to be more honest, have them sign an honesty statement *before* they begin a task; pledging truthfulness at the completion of a task—like we all do on our tax returns—has little effect. And if you want to influence which candidate people will vote for, it matters greatly whether those people focus on whom to *select* versus whom to *reject*. Even though I've taught psychology courses for decades, the authors surprised me repeatedly with these kinds of practical guidelines, all supported by experiments they describe in clear, nontechnical terms.

David McRaney, You are Not so Smart

<https://www.huffingtonpost.com/george-mocharko/you-are-not-so-smart-why- b 1419100.html>

## You are Now Less Dumb

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/312348/you-are-now-less-dumb-by-david-mcraney/9781592408795/>

**The author of the bestselling *You Are Not So Smart* gives readers a fighting chance at outsmarting their not-so-smart brains.**

**A mix of popular psychology and trivia**, *You Are Now Less Dumb* is grounded in the idea that we all believe ourselves to be objective observers of reality—except we’re not. But that’s okay, because our delusions keep us sane.

Expanding on this premise, McRaney provides eye-opening analyses of seventeen ways we fool ourselves every day, including:

- Enclothed Cognition (the clothes you wear change your behavior and influence your mental abilities)
- The Benjamin Franklin Effect (how you grow to like people for whom you do nice things and hate the people you harm).
- Deindividuation (Despite our best intentions, we practically disappear when subsumed by a mob mentality)
- The Misattribution of Arousal (Environmental factors have a greater effect on our emotional arousal than the person right in front of us)
- Sunk Cost Fallacy (We will engage in something we don’t enjoy just to make the time or money already invested “worth it”)

McRaney also reveals the true price of happiness, and how to avoid falling for our own lies.

[SEE LESS](#)

Conclusion: Learning to live well, practicing wellness, becoming better

### 299.2: Knowing, Practicing, Becoming (OT Gospel Doctrine Lesson 31, Sunday School) [“Happy Is the \[One\] That Findeth Wisdom”](#)

Wisdom Literature” represents ancient attempts to understand, describe and transmit secrets to living well (perhaps something like ancient self-help books?). This episode

- Introduces Wisdom literature
- Discusses the organization and themes of Proverbs
- Wrestles with the complex and complicated book Ecclesiastes

- Touches on categories of life that can lead to exploration of what it means to live well