

**WHEN RELATIONSHIPS SEEM SHALLOW**  
*TOUGH QUESTIONS, REAL ANSWERS*

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*“If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.” (James 3:13–18, NLT)*

**1. WISDOM IS LIVING TO BLESS GOD, OTHERS, AND BE BLESSED.**

*“Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here’s what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It’s the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts.” (James 3:13, Message)*

*“But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.” (Psalm 130:4, NIV)*

*“Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.” (Matthew 6:33, NLT)*

- a. **The beauty of a wise life is balance.**
- b. **The beauty of a wise life is reality.**

## 2. **RELATIONAL WISDOM IS A GIFT.**

*“Do people know where to find wisdom? Where can they find understanding? No one knows where to find it, for it is not found among the living. ‘It is not here,’ says the ocean. ‘Nor is it here,’ says the sea. It cannot be bought with gold. It cannot be purchased with silver. ... It’s worth more than the purest gold. “But do people know where to find wisdom? Where can they find understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all humanity. ... “God alone understands the way to wisdom; he knows where it can be found, for he looks throughout the whole earth and sees everything under the heavens.” (Job 28:12–24, NLT)*

*“Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way. If you don’t know what you’re doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You’ll get his help, and won’t be condescended to when you ask for it.” (James 1:2–5, Message)*

*“What is so special about you? What do you have that you were not given? And if it was given to you, how can you brag?” (1 Corinthians 4:7, CEV)*

*“By his wisdom and knowledge the LORD created heaven and earth. By his understanding he let the ocean break loose and clouds release the rain. My child, use common sense and sound judgment! Always keep them in mind. They will help you to live a long and beautiful life.” (Proverbs 3:19–22, CEV)*

### a. **Choose relationships.**

*“A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.” (Ecclesiastes 4:12, NLT)*

### b. **Choose authenticity.**

*“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.” (Romans 12:9, NLT)*

c. **Choose the highroad.**

*“Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.”*  
(Ephesians 4:2, NLT)

d. **Choose growth.**

*“Now I’m glad—not that you were upset, but that you were jarred into turning things around. You let the distress bring you to God, not drive you from him. The result was all gain, no loss.”*  
(2 Corinthians 7:9, The Message)

3. **WISDOM LOVES THOSE YOU ENCOUNTER DAILY.**

*“But despite Jesus’ instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.”*  
(Luke 5:15–16, NLT)

*“There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”*  
(John 15:13, NLT)

*“Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other.”* (1 John 4:11, NLT)