

# **SOLOMON'S SIGHT**

**Wisdom from the Wisest Man that Ever Lived**

**A Novel by Chris Field  
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## **Prologue Part 1 John's Bedroom, Suburbia, dead of night**

John's dream was too majestic to understand and too wonderful to forget. Something or someone majestic beckoned from another realm, opening him to things beyond his comprehension. He stared into the darkness, sensing this was a beginning: an amazing beginning. So, where would it take him?

## **Prologue Part 2 King Solomon's Throne Room, Jerusalem 1,000BC**

The three most trusted counsellors stood passive at their posts, below the golden steps leading past the golden lions to the troubled king stroking his greying beard. As always, protocol was of highest order in these opulent surroundings. Kings and Queens swooned in this presence. Each advisor stood as assigned, waiting on their master; the wisest man that ever lived. "This is my fortieth year", Solomon confided at last, as if the thought did not trouble him. The sages knew exactly what troubled his mind, but respectfully held their peace. The matter clearly sat heavy on him. Solomon stared blankly toward the gilded tapestry and spoke his mind. "My father reigned forty years. Saul reigned forty years." The implications were obvious. "Forty is the number of trial", the king continued. "Have I passed the test?" The question did not require an answer, yet the Arkite took the cue. With neck bent in deference he spoke with authority, "You have done excellently, Sire. Your kingdom is unsurpassed."

“My father built this kingdom”, the king reminded them. “I simply inherited it. Now I must pass it on.”

This was spoken the sting troubling the king.

“All the world knows your fame, my Lord”, another aged voice asserted.

“Maybe so”, the king reflected, “but I am not without faults.” The king’s head tilted ever so slightly toward his harem, then his eyes lit wistfully on idols set against the wall.

“The prince is ready”, the Arkite assured, but that suggestion did not settle easily on the king.

“He has read my words, then?” the king enquired.

“I took him through much of your text”, the calm voice replied.

“He does not care for it, does he?” The keen discernment was acknowledged by all with bowed head and silent reply.

“When he is king ....”

The monarch cut the sentence sharply. “No, he will not care! When he is king he will care less than now. Those who love wisdom seek it. Those do not care for it are fools and scorners.”

“Your Majesty”, a sage voice persisted, “we will ever be at his side to advise him.”

The king stared again at the wall. “Fools care not for good advice. I dare say his friends hold more sway than your eminent counsel.”

The room fell silent once again.

“If I may, Your Majesty, your book of wisdom is a gift to all, not just to your son.”

The assurance was cold comfort to the master of wisdom. “A man leaves all to his son and knows not if the offspring will be wise or a fool. What vanity!”

“He is your son, my Lord.”

“Yes, but sons are full of madness. They think the world their own and spurn lessons from the past.”

“You spelled it out for him, my Lord. You called your son to hear wisdom. In so doing you called all sons in all time to stop and hear. You have done a great thing.”

“Yes, my Lord”, another affirmed. “Through the ages young men the world over will become wise from all you have penned.”

Man’s distant future held no comfort to this troubled father. “My father told me, ‘Seek wisdom!’ and I did. Now my own son scorns such advice.” The regal voice shrank away as it whispered yet again the earnest wish, “My son, pay attention to my words.”

### **Prologue Part 3 The Heavenly Realm, in Eternity**

Brilliance from the magnificent tongue of flame glistened from the golden pavement. Yet the flame was pressed low, not just in abject devotion. The Glorious One’s sheer majesty impelled all to collapse in supplication and drink the wonder of that transcendent presence.

“You wish to call him?” The voice of warmth spoke with absolute knowledge yet invited confirmation.

The tongue of flame sprawled breathless against the golden glass, all beauty humbled by the surpassing glory. A mere minder of the lowest order this flame was yet glorious to behold. Human hearts dazzle at a mere glimpse of such awesome underlings. Here, however, in Majesty’s realm, all that is awesome pales into insignificance. Yet here, too, even he could bring his plea. While supreme protocol placed this flicker far beneath realms of hierarchy, for the pure of heart, protocol is swept aside.

“Yes, my Liege. I long to see him respond.” The flame bared his soul upon the golden pavement, incapable of lifting his gaze for the sheer brilliance before him.

“Does not wisdom call him every day?”

“Of course, my Liege, yet he has not heard.”

“Then, how would you call him?”

“With dreams, my Lord.”

A smile of approval danced on the majestic countenance as the Glorious One probed yet deeper.

“Why should I grant your request?”

“Well...” the flame hesitated, then found courage to speak on, “I so want him to have it.”

Infolding tongues of glory swirled in overwhelming radiance as all hung hushed in the presiding presence. Majesty finally broke silence with one further question.

“Is there not a word for this longing you bear?”

The minion stalled, probed by the gracious one’s prompt to voice what he had never dared say before.

“It is Grace, my Lord.”

The Majestic One laughed in delight. “Yes, it is!” Approval and energy engulfed the throne room in that wondrous moment. “And grace is never denied. So go and call, and call again and again. Grace will prevail, as it always does.”

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*Wisdom calls out loud, uttering her voice in the streets.  
Hear her in the gathering places, at the entrances,  
and in the city, saying...  
“How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity,  
and you scorners delight in mocking,  
and you fools hate knowledge?  
Turn around at my reproof.  
If you attend to me I will pour my spirit on you  
and I will make my words known to you.”*

*Solomon - 950 BC  
Book of Proverbs 1:20-23*

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## **Solomon's Sight Part One**

### **The Dream**

#### **John**

John was no stranger to dreams. They filled his nights with the same rambling journeys and weird events most mortals share. Consciousness swept away each fantastical fancy as it dissolved not only from sight but from memory.

There were exceptions of course: dreams that carried exhilaration or drama into the waking moment; images fixed in conscious memory; and even those visions that seemed to be more than dreams.

Then there were dreams of man's own making: dreams of success; happiness; wealth; fame and popularity. If he could, John would be a hero and be famous, and be rich, and be happy, and be loved by all.

Those dreams evaporate too.

So John turned to the powers of the day: things he could control and do to make dreams come true. He took on challenges with energy, determined to prove himself to others.

John was a survivor. He survived his boyhood pranks, managed reasonable grades at study, avoided the humiliation ascribed to those who didn't fit in, gained a reasonable job to start his working career and found a lovely young bride to share life and love with, and they had started a family.

He kept himself fit, kept a positive attitude, did more than an honest day's work - especially if he could impress one of his superiors, and kept out of trouble.

For all that, John was sitting pretty well in the middle of average. Of course he knew he was much better than average, but it was a fault of statistical process that someone as unique as he knew he was could be bunched in with all manner of ordinary people and even some obvious losers. John knew time would show he was not just another man down the street. It was his dream to be more than that.

#### **Come to the Mountain**

John struggled to back a bus onto the highway. Well, it was a bus by that point in the dream. Moments earlier John was passenger in a speed boat with Jenny and the children enjoying a dash across a lake. Somehow the boat morphed into a bus and he was its driver, and it had to be backed onto the road.

He was turned in his seat looking through a murky rear window when someone tapped on his door. They pointed forward. He peered through the windscreen at a huge mountain rising in front of him. There, on the peak, stood an old man staring straight at him. The man stretched a hand to John and simply said "Come". Immediately John was zapped from the bus to the mountain top to stand beside the stranger.

The dream immediately took on new substance: more vision than dream. John not only saw and knew things as you often do in dreams, but he saw deeper than ever before. Reality exposed its multiple layers, one on top of the other, but each on top. Confused as that sounds it made perfect sense on the mountain. Here John could see and perceive as never before.

The man on the mountain was old and venerable, yet young and energetic, and ancient beyond years. He was a king, yet also a servant. He was magnificent in power and authority, yet a mere wayfarer pointing to the next milestone. And none of this seemed out of place. Super-sense empowered John to know and see these competing realities in their wonderful convergence, all at the same time. He exulted at this heightened sensitivity.

The man spoke, breathing a voice charged with intimate compassion and austere power, youthful energy and venerable age, unchallenged authority and humble warmth. "Welcome, my Son."

Sensations charged through John's body. This was no mere greeting. It bore a potency of commissioning or something equally as awesome.

This fascinating stranger was not his father. Dad was much more earthy and simple than this venerable sage. The stranger's words became their own reality immediately they were breathed. Instantly John was 'Son' to this man, whomever this man was, and for a moment John basked in the embrace of that wonderful and affirming inclusion.

With commanding authority the stranger pointed far away and John turned to see. As he did they both eased forward, floating from the mountain toward the horizon, gliding over the mountainside with ever increasing haste. The flight became exhilarating and exhilaration intensified as they accelerated across vast landscapes just above the sweeping meadows, bustling towns, farms, forests, lakes and oceans.

The world with all its diversity swept beneath them as John drank in immense detail. He wasn't merely skimming past things, but truly seeing them, absorbing what they were, why they existed, and where they were destined.

He not only saw ships on the ocean, but their cargoes, where they were from and where they headed, all at the same time. One glimpse was enough for him to instantly know all this and more, as if realities were suddenly injected into his conscious mind.

He laughed out loud at his amazing capacity to absorb so much insight without even trying.

Every scene yielded the whole tapestry of its existence, even as John soared across them at breakneck speed.

John woke with the full sensation of flight almost lifting him from his bed. He sat half suspended with the pull of flight tugging at his limbs and remained motionless for long moments, caught between the dreaming flight and his waking weight. Then he gently nestled onto the bed and drank in the delight of the amazing encounter.

Rather than vaporise, this dream remained, continuing to charge every fibre of his body for the days that followed. It energised his mood and action and prevailed as an ever present distraction. He was totally preoccupied with the amazing experience and struggled to understand what it could possibly mean.

## **Blindness**

"I had the strangest dream the other day", John told Jenny as she bustled past with an arm full of things.

"Yes, you told me already. The man on the mountain."

He followed her to the cupboards where she packed away items strewn by the children.

“It was lovely at first, but now it bothers me.”

She squeezed past him to get to something else needing attention. “Yes dear, but it’s only a dream.” Her patronising words stung a little. Maybe it was “only a dream”, but it was HIS dream and he wanted to talk about it. Why didn’t she like just sitting and talking when there was something interesting to talk about?

He followed her again. “I wish I could see like that”, he said wistfully.

“I wish you could see all this mess and give me a hand. You’re always thinking about something, but there are jobs to be done. I’ve told you before it isn’t fair that you don’t do more around the place.”

John made himself useful, but kept the conversation going in his head. He would love Jenny to try to understand him, but whether she would help or not he really wanted to unravel the confused thoughts stirring inside him.

“What’s bothering you, John?” he asked himself. “It was just a dream.”

“Yes, it was just a dream, but it had something. It was offering me something.”

“Well, what?” The challenging voice took on the impatient tone of Jenny’s disinterest.

“On the mountain I could see things. I could see all sorts of things. It was amazing. The old man let me see things I couldn’t normally see.”

John’s thoughts and work were suspended as that realisation sank in.

“That’s it! That’s what’s bothering me. I could SEE things on the mountain. It wasn’t the flying that was so wonderful, it was the SEEING!”

The sweet dream left a sour aftertaste, and now John knew what it was. The dream exposed his blindness.

“Jenny is right. I can’t see the jobs that have to be done. But that’s not all I can’t see. Compared to the wise old man, I can’t see ANYTHING!”

## **Cry For Wisdom**

“If only I could see like that!” John berated himself.

He hadn’t intended to be blind and he always trusted his awareness of what went on around him, confident he wasn’t a sucker like others. He loved being asked for his opinion or listened to. He was pretty sure he could analyse things much better than others.

Yet he now sensed he was far more blind than he ever realised and blind to far too many things. He couldn’t see the jobs that needed to be done, as Jenny could. He also couldn’t really see himself clearly. Was he as special as he wanted to believe, or was he just another ‘also ran’ average guy living an average life? That question disturbed him.

What else was he blind to? He didn’t know. But he did know he was blind to far too many things.

“Oh to have that super sight! To know things and to have them in perspective. To see the big picture. To know what is going on.”

Something uncomfortable tugged deep inside. He wanted to soar again. He wanted to see again.

He wanted to have more of the wise old young man he met on the mountain. He wanted to be wise.

“That’s it!” he exulted. “I want Wisdom. I want to be wise like the man on the mountain.”

“I want to be wise”, he spoke out loud, then furtively looked around to see if anyone heard him. He always projected the image of an intelligent man who had his act together. He didn’t want people to know it was just a facade or to think he had gone crazy.

“Do you think I have much wisdom?” he ventured to Jenny after dinner.

“You got good grades, didn’t you?” she replied, dismissively.

“Yes but being good at study isn’t the same as being wise, is it?” He thought of some of the brainiacs in his classes who made huge messes of their lives. Being ‘smart’ wasn’t the same as being wise.

“Some of those pretty average students did quite well for themselves. I think they may have been wiser than me.” John was trying his hardest to catch a clearer picture of where he really stood.

Jenny remained dismissive. “You’ve done perfectly well for yourself, John. We’re getting on in life. You have good prospects. We have lots of friends.” Her voice trailed off as she headed down the hall.

John sat stewing in his thoughts, but Jenny was not without her own.

Her husband had been acting strange of late and now he was asking mid-life crisis questions before his time. Was there something wrong? Did he need her help? Sadly, Jenny had to admit she didn’t know how to give that kind of help. She was pretty and energetic, the life of the party when she had to be. But the kind of friendship that got beneath the surface was too deep for her. Keeping herself busy was her way of avoiding the deeper substance of life. Now her shallowness risked exposure by her husband’s strange mood.

Jenny had an idea and called to John down the hallway. “Why don’t you talk with Richard? Maybe he can help you understand this Solomon stuff.”

In an instant John was at her side peering deep into her face. “What did you say?” he demanded.

Jenny recoiled at the sudden confrontation. “I said talk to Richard”, she defended.

“But you called him Solomon. You called the old man Solomon!” John was fairly dancing as he spoke.

“Well, so what?” Unnerved, Jenny felt threatened by this strange behaviour.

“Why did you call him Solomon? I’ve never called him that. Where did you get that from?”

John’s intensity was confronting.

“I don’t know where it came from”, she objected. “It just came out. Call him Abraham Lincoln if you want to.” With a wave of her hand she hurried away from him to the safety of tasks in another room.

John stood stunned. “So it’s old Solomon is it?” he mused. “Yes. Of course. Solomon was a King, and he was wise, and that was thousands of years ago.” He slumped against the wall.

## **Richard**

John sat in his brother-in-law’s lounge as the cousins played happily outside. Jenny was at a training program that weekend which made the perfect timing for John to follow her suggestion.

“I’ve met King Solomon”, John announced to Richard once they were seated on the porch with their drinks.

“You’re into time travel these days, are you?” Richard’s easy manner was always enjoyable. There was a breezy effortlessness about him, even when he was scolding his children. John smiled at the tease.

“I had a dream in which I met old Solomon on a mountain and he gave me a taste of super sight.” This explanation sounded completely reasonable to John, having reviewed the dream so intensely over the past days.

“OK”, said Richard, “read me the bottom line of that sign over there.”

“No, not that kind of super sight”, John countered as Richard chuckled and sipped his drink. “I feel like Solomon was trying to show me something I’m missing, like trying to open my eyes.”

The conversation rambled along as John explained the dream, then Richard excused himself and came back with something in hand.

“I guess you’d like to know what old Solomon is trying to tell you.”

John nodded. “Yes. That’s probably the best way to put it. I want to know what the message is.”

Richard dropped a book on John’s lap.

“Hey, none of your religious stuff!” John didn’t mean to sound cross. Richard just smiled.

Pointing to the Bible Richard said, “That’s where you’ll find your Solomon. Book of Proverbs. The wisest man that ever lived wrote a bunch of stuff just for people like you.”

John knew about King Solomon’s Proverbs but had never read them. Now he flipped through the paperback and found Solomon’s Proverbs near the middle.

“Take that home with you and see if you can decipher what dear old Solomon is trying to tell you.”

The idea that King Solomon had something important to say to him down through the centuries fascinated John and he was keen to dig into the ancient writings. He declined an invitation to dinner and called his children to the car, bought fast food on the way home and packed the kids out of the way as quickly as he could.

Then he settled down to read the ancient writings of the wisest man that ever lived. He dared to hope that Solomon might have something important to tell him.

## **My Son**

*“My son, hear your father’s instruction.”*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 1:9*

As John opened to Solomon’s ancient text two words leapt from the page.

“My Son.”

That’s just what the old man said on the mountain. “Welcome, My Son.”

Instantly John recalled the awesome tone of that majestic voice. Looking at the page again it seemed that every word spoke to him with that same powerful resonance.

Sensing the wondrous presence of that mountain-top voice John once again felt energised by the potency of this amazing invitation. The sense of immediate and complete adoption into Solomon’s world and life and family was almost tangible.

And there it was in black and white. Solomon’s book said, “My son, hear your father’s instruction.”

“I am incorporated.” John whispered in amazement. “I am part of the family. I am not a guest, or a casual visitor, but a “Son”!”

Oh the joy and depth of that welcome. Oh to be absorbed into people’s friendship and confidences with such complete inclusion.



Here was an invitation, for all who would sit at Solomon's feet, to be privileged with the most intimate and powerful help from one eminently qualified to offer it.

John closed his eyes and relaxed into the invitation. "Thank you", he whispered. "I accept your most gracious offer. I will be a Son, if you will teach me."

John drank in the lovely sensation of finally fitting in somewhere, finally being connected where the connection really meant something. That sense of incorporation came tinged with a hunger for such deeper connection with others, as if all his friendships now proved shallow shams, empty of the bond human souls were meant to enjoy.

He wondered if he would ever know that kind of connection with Jenny and his children.

John was asleep in his favourite chair, with an open Bible on his lap when Jenny found him. He seemed so serene she didn't disturb him. It was he disturbing her yet again.

They agreed they had each had enough religion in their younger years and would not give any more time to it. If John was turning to faith, did that mean their fierce independence was failing them? Had they made the right choices along the way?

These deeper thoughts called her to reflections she always avoided, so she shook them off and went quietly to bed.

## **Adjusting to Wisdom**

John woke early that Sunday morning and as he began to read Solomon's proverbs he was at first disappointed. He loved quick summaries, briefing notes, succinct and clever words that saved him thinking things through himself.

Solomon's Proverbs weren't written that way. At times they seemed downright confusing; a jumble of ideas. John pressed on, in hope the smiling old man on the mountain had a message for him in those pages. Above all John really wanted to find the secret to Solomon's amazing Sight.

Starting with high sounding promises Solomon's Book of Proverbs eventually seemed to bog down. It starts with promise to give wisdom, instruction and understanding and make the simpleminded wise and the wise even wiser. Yet along the way it becomes a mere collection of random thoughts. John couldn't tell if Solomon lost his way or if there was special mystery in the unrelated insights.

As his busy week made its demands, finding time to read was a constant challenge. If Solomon had not lured him so forcefully in his dream John could easily drop Proverbs from his busy life. He knew from experience that passion for something helps you find time for it. With the voice from the mountain ringing in his ears Solomon's words were poured over at all times of day and night and in some of the most unusual places.

"I have to let wisdom speak to me", John reasoned, "rather than make it say what I want." And with that thought he scoured the pages, reading and re-reading words that promised to make him wise.

## **Solomon's Sight Part Two Attention**

### **Pay Attention**

*"My son, attend to my words: incline your ear to my sayings."*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 4:20*

"Am I getting it?" John asked himself. These pages had not made the impression he hoped. If Proverbs was a repository of wisdom he was not wired to tune into it. This bothered him. If this was the repository of wisdom and he couldn't get anything out of it, what did that say about his egotistical ideas of how wise he already was?

"If I can't understand the language of wisdom then what kind of fool must I be?" he chided. It wasn't until he was half asleep that John relaxed enough to listen, rather than analyse what was being said.

The rich authority of that voice from the mountain picked up a quote John had read that day.

"My son, attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings."

Solomon's wisdom would be missed unless the reader paid attention to the message. The message didn't come by osmosis, or by keeping the book under the pillow. It had to be read and studied. The need to 'pay attention' suddenly seemed a key insight.

"Pay Attention, John!" was the common command from his teachers.

"Pay Attention!" "Pay Attention!" "Pay Attention!"

To John it was a game played by adults to bring children under control. He used that same command to make his children obey his demands.

Now, as a mature adult, a venerable sage was telling him to 'pay attention'. It was no game but a vital necessity. It was no demand from an angry teacher, but gentle wise instruction meant to change his life.

"OK", John thought, "how do I do that?"

John noticed that paying attention is a major theme of Solomon's wisdom keys. Listening and following instructions are clearly mentioned, and so too is the idea of digging for wisdom as people dig for gold and silver.

Paying attention linked to Solomon's instruction to diligently dig for wisdom.

"Seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures" Proverbs 2:4

### **Alert Ears**

Toying with Solomon's order to pay attention, John dug into Solomon's original words. Solomon's ancient Hebrew picture word meant 'pricked up ears'.

That immediately prompted memory of an adventure with his dad. Father and sons had gone deer hunting and tramped for three days without a sighting. Finally they spotted a lovely deer nibbling in a clearing. They were downwind so all they had to do was take aim and let off a round or two in quick succession.

As John took aim someone made a noise and immediately the creature's ears pricked up. Everyone froze and waited. Through the scope John saw the ears alert and attentive, searching for further evidence of danger as it stepped cautiously into the bushes.

John let off a round before the animal was out of sight and hit the beast in the rump. That led to many a joke over the years about which end of any deal John could reliably get.

With Solomon's insights now guiding him, John was glad for that clear picture attentive pricked up ears.

"Oh to give such focused attention!"

It was hard for John to pay attention when multiple issues demanded concentration. There was work, and Jenny and the kids, and the finances, and the list of odd jobs, and his interests in sport, hobbies and entertainment, plus extended family and friends.

Focus on any one of those was often patchy at best, because he just couldn't give anything all the attention it deserved.

Maybe it was true that all he could hit was the rump end.

## **Big Beady Eyes**

Another unexpected memory brought a smile.

While some families were visiting a large bunch of children ran riot in the back yard as parents chatted inside.

As John set up the BBQ he had to adjust the level on the uneven pavers. Fixing uneven pavers was on his job list and Jenny would say he should have done it long ago, but that's another matter.

Down on all fours John held the weight of the device with his shoulder, struggling to turn a stiff thread on one of the adjustments. There he was, stuck. If he stopped holding the weight the BBQ would topple, but he couldn't get the adjustment to move.

He had decided to do this task on his own, so there was no one assisting him, and if he bellowed for help from where he was behind the shed he would feel foolish.

That's when he turned and saw a youngster, probably only four years old, watching him with big beady eyes.

The lad was absorbed by the whole situation, giving John his total attention.

"I need a spanner", John explained, but the lad just stood motionless.

"Spanner", he said slowly and clearly. "Do you know what a spanner is?"

The boy with the big beady eyes just stared.

John's back began to ache. He needed a solution and he needed it fast. He looked for anything that might help and could see nothing useful.

When he turned to talk once again to his young watcher the lad had collected a lump of wood. It was about the right thickness to stabilise the BBQ.

The lad passed him the wood and moments later John was free from his trap and standing tall over the youngster. He shook hands with his young assistant, then laughed at the grease left on the boy's fingers.

As John washed both pairs of hands a mum came past and said, “So you’ve met little Mike. He’s deaf, you know?”

John looked at the youngster with admiration. “I didn’t know that. But he sure is good at paying attention.”

With a fresh smile on his face John now realised Mike wasn’t just watching with those big beady eyes, he was ‘paying attention’. He took in what he saw, observed the need and found a solution, without a word, and without hearing a thing.

John decided alert ears and big beady eyes would remind him to pay attention. He also decided that from that moment on he would pay attention like never before.

## **You Are Not Looking**

Jenny’s voice broke into John’s consciousness. Seated in the lounge, relaxing after dinner, buried in some interesting reading material, he must have become quite absorbed and turned off to all the sounds around him.

“Your daughter has been trying to get your attention.” Jenny’s tone bore the rebuke that he did this frequently. This was not the first time she had to get his attention for one of the children.

He looked up to see his youngest child holding a piece of paper with a simple scribbled drawing.

“Look what I drew, Daddy.” She immediately pointed to various nondescript images, explaining what they were.

John gave her a smile and a cursory nod and peeped back at the magazine on his lap. Her voice rattled on in a sing-song tone as she described things only she could see with clarity. He felt satisfied he had done his fatherly duty. He had looked at her work and smiled at her.

Next moment she was shaking his arm, her hurt little voice saying, “Daddy you are not looking!”

This was John’s cue to give a glib dismissal. Each child had made their clumsy drawings and he had looked at most of them and smiled at each child’s inability. He was a grownup, not a child; he had grownup things to do like reading interesting articles. She needed to understand she would get a measured amount of his attention and she should be happy with that.

As he turned to face her he was struck by her big beady eyes, filling with tears.

“You’re not looking”, she repeated. There was no doubt she was looking; looking directly at him and watching his eyes. She didn’t want a glib excuse, nor to hear that daddy had important grownup things to do. She wanted her daddy to give her his full and undivided attention.

Those big beady eyes stung him with the promise he had made to himself just that morning, “I will pay attention like never before.”

For an awkward pause John struggled with two competing impulses. He would happily chase wisdom and try new things if doing so didn’t disrupt his self-indulgent habits, but how could he change and become wise if he did not put wisdom ahead of selfish routines?

With a sigh, he closed his magazine and tossed it aside. Turning to his little girl he lifted her onto his lap and said, “Okay Sweetie, you tell Daddy all about your picture.”

After she ended her lengthy descriptions of the various scribbles John decided to delight her with some descriptions of his own. He pointed to the bumpy lumps scrawled as backdrop to the house and farm on her page.

“Do you know who lives on that mountain?” The tone of mystery in his voice drew her in and she whispered, “Nooo”.

“Well there is a very, very old man there. And he is wiser than all the people in the whole world. And he is watching over the farm, and the birds, and the, what was that again?”

“It’s a cow, Daddy. Don’t you know anything?” she scolded.

Wow! John was stung again; this time not by her words or her big beady eyes, but by the way she, tender as she was, had already mastered her mother’s critical tone. He really should pay attention to that and to what each of his children is becoming, and what he is doing that is either helping them or messing them up.

## **Jenny’s Mood**

Once the children were packed off to bed John could get back to his interests again so he turned to the pages of Solomon’s wisdom. Hardly any time later he was interrupted, this time by Jenny in one of her moods.

She barged into the room with that look that says something like “I’ve caught you thinking of yourself again. Why don’t you do something useful?”

That’s not what she said. In fact she didn’t say much at all.

John looked up with the thought, “Why does she have to interrupt me when I’m finally doing something interesting?” His face probably betrayed that thought. Then his mind went to, “Let her get it off her chest and leave the room. Then I can get back to what I was doing.”

Something in her face stopped him. Amid the anger or whatever disturbed her there was a hint of pain in her eyes.

Instantly John remembered those attentive ears and the big beady eyes. He suddenly felt prompted to tune in to Jenny as he had done earlier to his daughter’s picture.

He peered into her face. He couldn’t read the emotion, but it was strong and probably loaded with a litany of his failings. Yet he also sensed her helplessness. She was hurt and frustrated, or something like that, but she also wanted to be cared for.

She didn’t really want to argue with him, she wanted something more than that.

## **New Response**

Without thinking John stood and wrapped his arms around his wife.

She was stiff with anger but he held her like a lost child who had just been found. She slowly softened in his embrace and began to sob into his shoulder.

This was new. It was a little scary. Yet it felt wonderful to be there for Jenny, his beloved enemy, in a new way.

“I haven’t been paying you much attention lately”, he ventured.

She responded with something that sounded like a snort.

“I am sorry. Please forgive me.” She did not respond.

“I guess I’ve been a bit busy lately.” At that she pulled from his shoulder and wiped her face as she attacked him. “You’re always too busy.”

With that she hurried out of the room.

When John finally settled back to Solomon's Proverbs he picked up a notepad and wrote a few key words. First he put 'Be attentive', and followed that with 'Ears and Eyes', then added 'Jenny and the children'.

Before John fell asleep that night he gave Jenny his shoulder like he used to when they were first married. He didn't say anything and neither did she, but it felt like the early steps in a journey of recovery. Maybe they couldn't get back to those good old days but they could at least improve on where things were.

## **Alert to Tom**

John found a picture of a group of deer and mounted it on the wall near his desk. "Going hunting, are we?" Tom jibed as he cruised past.

"I'm using this as a metaphor for paying attention. You know, alert ears." John pointed to the raised ears of the deer. Tom gave him a judicial stare with raised eyebrows.

"It's about being more attentive." John tried to sound important and noble as he said it, but Tom just kept him in his sights.

"I think it's a good idea", John added, to cover his discomfort.

"Best of luck", Tom said with a hint of a sneer, as he turned and walked on.

John felt unsettled. Something wasn't right. He sensed it but couldn't explain it. Then it hit him. Tom had approached him several times in past months with things he wanted to discuss. They included Tom's opinion about work, rambling questions about philosophical issues and such like. John had always been dismissive, since Tom's insights and issues always seemed so petty compared to his own.

So much for being attentive. John was about as uncaring as they come. What's more, Tom's raised eyebrows made John realise that any attempt to turn over a new leaf and learn how to pay attention certainly included giving Tom a little more of his ears and eyes.

At the lunch break John found Tom, busy with his food and newspaper, and plopped himself beside him.

"I owe you an apology." John tried to sound comfortable doing something he had never done.

"You've tried to talk with me about things at times and I've not listened. I'm sorry."

Tom just kept reading and chewing. The silence was deafening.

"Will you forgive me?" It was more than a request for forgiveness. John needed to get some kind of response from Tom.

After a long pause, filled only with the sound of Tom chewing, one shoulder moved in an offhand shrug. And that was it. That was all John was going to get.

After another minute of silence John stood to excuse himself, still trying to sound like this was an everyday occurrence.

Before departing, however, John decided to take his new contrition one step further. Dropping quickly to a squat at Tom's eye level he spoke with deliberation. "Tom, if you ever need to talk with me and I don't pay attention, just mention that picture of the deer and I'll get the message."

With that Tom turned to look into John's face, and then gave the slightest nod before turning back to his paper. Learning how to pay attention was much more uncomfortable than John expected.

## **Solomon's Sight Part Three**

### **Seeing**

#### **Right Focus - Wisdom**

*"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom."*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 4:7*

While on an errand John stopped to read a sign in a shop window then turned to move on. As he did he bumped into a lady carrying a small child. She wasn't watching where she was going, but then, neither was he.

John's polite apology did nothing to appease the woman's anger. She scolded him at the top of her voice, accusing him of not watching where he was going, and venting all the frustrations of her day on him.

John was shocked. "She was paying less attention than me!" John protested to himself. With that he took a seat to let his mood settle.

"Look at that!" he told himself, as another mum came past fussing with her child and not looking ahead. "And look at him!" he added as a youngster came past totally focused on a device in his hand.

Everywhere John looked he saw people who were not paying attention. Or, more correctly, they were paying all their attention to one thing, while not paying attention to something else, like where they were going.

"Everyone is absorbed", he acknowledged. "They are all losing themselves in something or other." He smiled at the absurdity of it all and that brightened his mood. There were people everywhere, each absorbed in their own little world of distraction. Each giving full attention to their shopping list, their donut, their phone, their newspaper, their complaining child, or whatever.

"Paying attention is not enough", he mused. "You must pay attention to the right things." John pulled out a piece of paper to write that down and again he smiled.

Solomon had always told him this, but he just didn't let it click. Solomon's instruction isn't to just 'pay attention' but to pay attention to the right things.

"My son, attend to my words; incline your ear to my sayings." "Get Wisdom!"

Everyone has their favourite topic, their choice of paper or magazine, their pet interest, the distractions in their life, and they give undivided attention to them. They don't pay attention to the more important things, like wisdom.

He had only recently been caught ignoring his daughter because he was too absorbed in his magazine.

“Wow!” he realised. “A person could invest their whole life, wholeheartedly, in the wrong things. People burn up the days and years of their life with devoted focus on things that aren’t worth their time and attention, while things that could change their life and make a difference just get ignored.”

Wisdom calls out in the public places to people who just walk on by. They love their simple mindedness, or they love their opinions or they just don’t want to learn.

He scrawled the words “Right Focus - Wisdom” onto his paper, then got up to finish his errand.

## **Gold Fever**

*“Seek wisdom the way you search for silver and hunt for hidden treasure.”*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 2:4*

John took time noting how often Solomon urged his readers to seek wisdom. And he particularly noted the instruction to not only listen casually to what wisdom might have to say, but to actually go digging for it, like looking for buried treasure.

Searching for treasure took John back to the crazy weekend he and his brothers spent panning gold. Their dad drove them to a remote fossicking spot where they hastily pitched tents and got into action. While the boys headed to the river dad wasn’t at all interested and brought books to read while they got cold and muddy.

Yet when the boys ran back to show their dad a tiny gold speck the man was transformed. He ended up waist deep in the mud, despite the pouring rain, shouting instructions as gold fever coursed through his veins.

What they came home with didn’t cover the road costs let alone the medical bills.

The image of his demented father scrambling to find his fortune always brought a smile to the family and grumpy grunts from dad.

Now, all these years later, that weekend gave John a picture of what it is to be determined to find wisdom.

Dad’s casual approach to that trip, aiming to read the hours away, was replaced by a passion that unlocked his energies and his full dedication.

“Just how much could someone gain if they had Wisdom Fever?” John wondered.

Of course, not all the gold diggers were drunk on gold fever. Some were patient, meticulous workers who followed a strategy and put in consistent effort to finally reach the payoff. Yet they had the staying power to keep focused, and keep doing the hard yards when there was no payoff in sight.

“I don’t care how long it takes”, John promised himself, “I’m going to keep digging for wisdom. I’m not stopping until I have Solomon’s Sight.”

## **Seeing and Doing**

Like the aches and pains of a gold miner John had his own aches and pains as he searched for wisdom. One of the difficulties was the unexpected effect of seeking to see more clearly.



The fantastical flight of the dream with all its comprehending sight soured in the daylight. The dream had not dissolved with the dawn but the sight of ordinary things in his ordinary life seemed shameful compared to the majestic visions from the mountain.

Simply put, John didn't like what he saw in the cold light of day. Instead of soaring insights of grand things, all he saw were clearer pictures of his own failings and limitations, and things that needed his attention.

Wisdom was not a sweet intoxication but a bitter pill. To make matters worse, the more reality he saw the less he could recall the sweet excitement of his dream. Maybe he was better off blind, unable to see his own foolishness, selfishness and failure. Maybe wisdom was for those who lived a higher, more noble quality of life.

With that nagging doubt in mind John flipped again through the worn pages of proverbs.

Solomon's opening remarks clearly say the proverbs are to give insight to the simple.

Insight is a delightful thing, but not if you see things you don't want to see.

John remembered his painful moments of the past few days. He was caught neglecting his daughter, and shown how much he neglected his wife. He even realised how much he neglects those around him.

It was enough to make a man feel like a heel and want to berate himself.

As that thought faded John had a cheerful realisation. He was now working on his failings. He gave his daughter a happy moment with Daddy. He gave Jenny a hug she obviously needed. He apologised to Tom.

John relaxed. He was not only 'seeing' in a new way, his insights led him to new actions. He was 'doing' things differently now.

Sure, he didn't like what he saw, but it didn't stop there. He was taking action. He was changing. Wisdom was changing him. Wow!

He reached for his notepad and scrawled the words, 'Wisdom in a "doing" word'. While wisdom includes profound insights it is not about thinking clever thoughts, but doing the right thing.

He flipped Proverbs open again and scanned words he had read and reread many times. There were all kinds of instructions about what to DO, not just what to think. Avoid the wrong kind of people, avoid signing on behalf of someone else, pay attention to things, be diligent, and the list went on.

He settled back in his chair, hands behind his head. It was resolution time. He was going to become a 'doer'. As he read through Proverbs he would seek to DO whatever he discovered was wise. It didn't matter if he understood why things were important, but that he did the right things. This was a game changer and he was positively excited about it.

## **Retrained Sight**

*"How long, simple ones, will you love simplicity,  
and scorners delight in scorning,  
and fools hate knowledge?"*

*Wisdom's Voice - Book of Proverbs 1:22*

"Solomon goes on about unimportant things", John complained to himself when he first waded through the proverbs. "It's all so basic and elementary. I want the good stuff, not this simple fluff!"

John knew to suppress such reactions, assuring himself that this ‘simple stuff’ had significance even if he couldn’t see it yet.

Among those ‘simple’ things were categories John thought quite simplistic. Solomon liked to categorise people into a few basic groups, such as the simple, fools, wise and scorners. These seemed nothing more than vague categories at first, but as John read and re-read Solomon’s insights his perception seemed to sharpen.

John had heard how our brain’s reticular activating system wakes our attention to things we otherwise ignored. He now experienced that very process as the meaningless labels of Solomon took on significance.

Simple people are not only clueless, but seem to enjoy their blindness. They don’t realise what they miss or the dangers around them. They can love being simple.

Scorners are those who choose to mock others and get their kicks out of pulling things down, rather than learning from them.

Fools are those who could do much better for themselves but choose to despise the input that would help them.

These three categories of people desperately need wisdom, even though Solomon’s insights are also supposed to make wise people wiser.

To John’s surprise these three categories caught his attention all around him every day. The insults passed among the staff as they mocked the boss or another employee were clear examples of scorn. The silly notions and empty pursuits of some were clearly the vain distractions of the simple. And most disappointing of all, were those who simply refused to take opportunities open to them to better themselves, get a better handle on their job or their situation, as they were allergic to the knowledge that would better them.

What is more, the simple, the scorners and the fool all failed to do things. Their lack of wisdom translated into failure to act. So they stayed trapped in their miserable state.

John often sat back and observed those around him, in work and social settings, seeing how few displayed the wisdom he constantly dug out.

“I may not be seeing very far ahead”, John thought to himself, “but at least some things close at hand are now in focus.” That realisation put a smile on his face. John was ‘seeing’ better than he had before. It was a beginning, but that meant he was not beyond hope. What could start could continue. He was on the pursuit of wisdom, and he was going to get there.

## **The Wisest Boy**

As John, Jenny and the children returned from a day trip John’s eldest child asked for a story. This was a treat the children always enjoyed and it helped to counter the boredom of travelling.

John’s stories were usually rambling tales of adventure or misadventure filled with fantasy characters of the kind he enjoyed as a child. But things were changing.

“Let me tell you about the wisest boy in my class at school”, John announced.

“Was that you, Daddy?” came a little voice.

“Well you just wait and see.”

John’s mind went back to the fourth grade and one very hot summer. “There were twenty-three of us in the class and I was one of the smartest. Mrs Jackson, my teacher, often put me in charge of the whole class when she had to leave the room.”

“One very hot day we were all sweltering and it was very hard to do our work. Most of us were bored and distracted.”

“Mrs Jackson decided to fix our problem with a portable cooler, but she had to leave the room to find it, since it was moved around the school. She put me in charge while she was gone.”

“Soon some students complained about how hot they were. Once one started the others joined in. Then they urged me to let them go into the corridor or even out under the shade of a big tree. It probably wasn’t any cooler there, but it seemed like a good idea escape the hot room.”

“I knew we were not allowed to leave until the bell rang, but I also knew the day was extra hot. That’s why Mrs Jackson had gone to get a cooling machine.”

“I began to think things through, because I was a good thinker and one of the smartest kids in the class. I figured that the reason Mrs Jackson was gone so long was because the cooler could not be found. And I worked out that if there was no cooler and it was so very hot, then we’d be allowed to leave the hot room, into the corridor, or even outside. Then I worked out that if Mrs Jackson had been there she would have taken us out, but since she wasn’t there and I was in control of the class, then it would be up to me to let the class leave. It all made perfectly good sense.”

“I told the class how I had figured things out. That made everyone happy. Well, not everyone. Silly old Billy Ames didn’t like it one bit. He sat there with his arms folded and a big frown on his face. The others saw him and teased him. Billy was always telling people if he thought they had broken the rules, yet there was usually a lot more fun in breaking the rules than in keeping them. So we called him Billy Goat, because he was so stubborn.”

“And what’s more, Billy Ames wasn’t very smart. He was usually getting the worst marks for his work and he just couldn’t keep facts and numbers in his head. He was nowhere near as clever as me.”

“But Billy objected to me taking the class out of the room. He said the rules said we weren’t allowed outside without a teacher and there was no teacher out there so we couldn’t leave the room. Everyone said “Boooo” to that.”

“I went up to Billy and told him I was the boss of the class now and not him. I told him he had better do what I said because the teacher put me in charge. But Billy wouldn’t budge, even when we all chanted ‘Billy Goat’ at him over and over again.”

“Finally I said that the rest of us would go outside and cool off while silly Billy would roast inside the room. And with that we charged into the corridor and then out under the shade of the tree.”

Here John paused as the scene reformed in his mind.

“What happened next, Daddy?” came the earnest question.

“What happened next wasn’t very nice. There was a snake out near the tree, but we didn’t see it until it was too late. Cathy Willis saw it and screamed, but she just stood there and was bitten. The rest of us went running and screaming and some teachers came and killed it and called the ambulance and all that.” John’s heart was beating in his throat as the awful drama forced itself upon him.

His voice cracked as he continued. “I was in big trouble. Mrs Jackson got into trouble for leaving me in charge. The Principal chewed me out really bad and the Police came and let me know how irresponsible I was. Mr Willis was raging mad when he came to the school and thumped the desk and shouted.”

“I was never allowed to have any authority in the class ever again, and I didn’t want it either. I moved my seat to the back of the class and stayed there for the rest of the year. I was seated behind Billy Ames. And every day I would look at him and try to feel smarter than him, because I always knew the answers he didn’t know. But I couldn’t get past the fact that Billy was right. And that

made him much smarter than me. I could get eight out of ten in a test, but he never broke the rules and he never put someone in hospital.”

Jenny reached across and took John’s hand as his eyes welled with tears. “Do you want me to drive?” she offered.

“No, I’m fine”, he assured her.

“You never told me that story before.” There was a tone of sympathy in her voice he rarely heard.

“I guess I never wanted to remember it.”

“So Billy was the wisest boy?” The children had caught it.

“Yes, Billy Ames was the wisest boy in class. And I want each of you to be the wisest kid in your class too. I want you to get good grades and go on and get a good job. But just because you’re smart doesn’t mean you are wise. Wisdom is learning to do what you are told, to do the right thing, to follow instructions and not just do what you want to do.”

## **Improved Sight**

John sat and listed the things he had learned so far from Solomon. His head was full of tidbits and words that meant something to the wise king but didn’t yet seem relevant in John’s modern world. He pushed those threads aside to make note of things he actually understood, not just those still teasing him.

He started with the word ‘Sight’, because that is what he sought. He wanted Solomon’s Sight, seeing things in a much clearer and deeper way.

That led him to write ‘Pay Attention’ and ‘Alert Ears’ and ‘Big Beady Eyes’.

He added the names of his immediate family under that, so he would be prompted to pay particular attention to each of them. He then added Tom and a few other people he knew he needed to give more attention to.

Then he remembered about taking action and wrote ‘Doing - Wisdom is Action’.

His recollections about the snake incident and the wise stubbornness of Billy Ames prompted yet another notation: ‘Do the Right Thing’.

John scribbled another note: “The first gift of sight is to open the eyes.” Maybe he should have written ‘ears’, but John now knew intuitively that true listening is multi-faculty. He had to see and hear and tune in to people and things with his whole being. True sight is a quality of perception that turns his whole life into a powerful sensor.

John’s short list was a pretty simple start to his quest for wisdom, but he had started. He was on the journey. It seemed like the longest journey in the world, but John had his sights on that mountain top and he resolved to never stop heading there.

Solomon’s wisdom offered much more than the simple thoughts on John’s page, but as he mused on what he had written John could see how his whole life would have been ever so different if he had just followed those simple guidelines from his the start.

What could he have achieved if he had paid attention in class or listened to those who tried to give him advice? How much better would his marriage and family be if he had only given more attention to his wife and children? How different would things be if he had followed the rules and listened to the guidelines, instead of hitting so many bumps along the way? How much more could he have achieved if he actually did the things he often talked about, instead of just dreaming about what it would be like?

## **Telling Richard**

“So what has old Solomon taught you?” Richard asked as he handed John a drink.

John had convinced Jenny it was good for the families to catch up again, but he really wanted time with Richard. He may even thank him for pointing him to the Book of Proverbs.

“Solomon taught me to pay attention”, John announced.

Richard raised his glass in a toast and said, “Congratulations. You can now start school.”

“No”, countered John, “it’s not a childish matter. Paying attention is a very grown up skill.”

“Whatever”, was all Richard could offer. “I’ve never paid much attention to Proverbs. It’s too bitsy for me.”

“Well that’s where you’re wrong”, John dived in, leaning forward. “Wisdom has to be dug out like you dig for treasure. So Solomon deliberately wrote it the way he did to sort out those who would dig and those who would walk away.”

“So you’re a wise man and I’m an oaf?” Richard challenged.

John eased off and dismissed the matter.

“The way I see it Solomon is actually transmitting something to us. It’s deeper than ideas. It’s not a set of steps to success, but a whole way of life. I can’t explain it any better than that, but that’s how it gets to you.”

“Well if you ever find out where that mountain is make sure you send me directions.”

John enjoyed the afternoon. While Richard wasn’t a scholar of Proverbs he certainly knew how to pay attention. The way Richard tuned into what Liz was thinking and the way he was one jump ahead of his kids was really impressive. Richard just naturally paid attention to things and people, while John had to concentrate on it.

Yet that was encouraging. If being attentive could become natural for Richard there was hope it would one day be natural for John too.

Another nice thing was that Jenny and the kids always came back from Uncle Richard’s place feeling good and being a bit more cooperative.

## **Solomon’s Sight Part Four Consequences**

## **Back to the Mountain**

John gave up hope of ever recapturing the exhilaration of his mountain top dream. He carefully preserved the memories, settled that they would eventually fade and be lost forever. But he was wrong.

That night his dreams had him working at an ice-cream stand near a train station, but somehow the ice-cream morphed into Indian takeaway for which he had no recipe. He was rescued from that nonsense by someone who told him to look behind him. There, to his amazement, and also his utter delight, a mountain rose lofty and majestic and there atop it all stood the same old young man he thought he would never see again.

The man beckoned with his hand and John was pulled irresistibly in a rapturous glide to the mountaintop. Once settled beside his mentor John peered intently at the young man beside him, full of regal authority, yet a friend, or even a servant. Young, but ageless, or timeless. Full of youthful energy and strength yet tempered with aeons of experience and insight. “Oh to be such a man”, John thought.

The young old man greeted John with “Welcome my son”. Again John felt the embrace of overwhelming acceptance and inclusion, dissolving the gulf between them and making them kin.

For the most fleeting moment John thought the man flashed as a tongue of flame, brilliant and awesome. But no, it must have been the sunlight glistening on the golden breastplate that wasn't a breastplate at all, it was a gleaming white tunic, or was it.

Solomon raised his arm toward the far away horizon and when John turned his gaze he once again had wings, gliding down the mountain slope and soaring across the rolling countryside, discovering vista upon vista.

John revelled in the amazing comprehension, as if the world were an open book for his inspection. He could see with such profound sight it was as if life itself yielded its secrets.

Then, unexpected, the flight stopped its forward movement as John began to rise on an updraft, seeing the world from a completely different perspective. This time, instead of scanning the landscape in its vastness, the landscape began to morph before him, heaving and changing before his very eyes as time unfolded and days rolled into months and months into years as history mushroomed before him.

John woke with a start, heart beating in his chest. He was exhilarated and delighted to visit the mountain yet again, but this was different. It was powerful and insightful, but terrifying. His palms were cold and wet.

He rose quietly and made a hot drink, surprised that his hands shook as he lifted the cup. Something about what he saw stuck like a knife in his gizzards. He couldn't find a word for it yet, but he shook his head to stop the rolling image replaying in his mind. Somehow it agonised him to see one thing inevitably roll into another in a passing sequence of unavoidable destiny.

Something erupted inside him, like an insight bursting to be released. He desperately wanted the panorama torn from his mind. It scared him and he longed to retreat from what he saw into delusions he long held dear. The truth confronting him was more than he could bear. Yet he could not put it into words or put it out of mind.

He slumped into a chair in the pre-dawn darkness and gazed across the neighbourhood.

## **One Thing Leads To Another**

Reluctantly John allowed himself to confront his dream. After a wonderful flight across vistas of human endeavour he had soared high above it all to look down on those diverse realms. Like turning pages of a book he saw progressive change over time, for better and for worse.

He saw pioneers clear land and build homesteads that blossomed into villages that became towns. He saw barns become factories, tracks become roads, impressive town halls dwarfed by newer, taller buildings. Children grew into young men and women, who married and raised families, chased their dreams then lamented their failing health. He saw wealth amassed to be squandered. He saw noble ideals dissolve into greedy lust for power. He saw good corrupted by evil and squalor conquered by redemption. Good and bad each had their day but neither could hold absolute sway, for inevitable change swept their memory away.

His gut pained as he reviewed these changing tides of time. His mind reeled in vain attempt to put words to his uneasy feelings.

He could feel the power of what he had seen, yet, like strong medicine, his body shuddered with the potency coursing through his veins. He desperately wanted to be well again. But what would such strong medicine do to him? Would he ever see things the same again?

John continued in this state for several days, keeping to himself and hoping for recovery. As strength and composure returned a ray of insight filtered into his addled mind.

What he saw so powerfully is that nothing is static. Everything is part of a continuum already moving along its course before we come along, and continuing in its course once we are gone. The raw inevitability of it all shouted ‘insignificance’ to all his high hopes and dreams, and shouted ‘impotence’ to all his hopes of making a difference.

The best John could do to summarise all that was to scrawl “One Thing Leads to Another”. Once it was on the page he underlined it and underlined it again.

The truth was completely obvious yet John had not seen it so clearly before. As his dream soared over the sweeping landscape and as history rolled like a carpet before him there was no mistaking the shocking truth.

What happened in the past set up the future.

What is happening now is the outcome of things set in motion years before.

John’s dream had swept across crops growing, villages rebuilding, ships on their journey and wars sweeping the land. Each seemed to be a great venture of its own.

Now he shuddered. They were inevitable. People drawn into their vortex were helpless captives to the rolling sequence of events. “One Thing Leads to Another.”

People must be fed and crops are planted. Villages crumble and new homes must be made.

Someone sends a ship because there’s a prize to be won or a bill to be paid. A war is started and men run to fight on both sides.

Each of the myriad processes of life is a steam-roller of its own, coursing across the globe and bruising the helpless people who can’t get out of the way.

## **John in the Vortex**

It felt sickening to be nothing more than a pawn in someone else’s game: a mere piece of driftwood on an ocean John did not understand, pushed by tides and winds he could hardly recognise let alone navigate.

“I was dropped into a swirling tide before I even knew how to swim”, he lamented. “How did I ever think I was in control of anything?”

“I chase my dreams without a clue if they are worth the effort. I buy other people’s values without a thought for their merit.”

“I compete for good grades, only so I can get a job. And I get a job and rack up bills. And I chase my tail trying to get ahead. But who said where ‘ahead’ was anyway?”

“I marry and have a family and they grow around me whether I notice or not.”

“I buy a car and swap it for another, and another, and grow older while I pay the bills.”

“The politicians change and society changes and the music changes and our enemies are now our allies, or the other way around. New things are created every day and what was once sought after is now left to rust. But for all the gadgets we have the same issues people faced for millennia.”

“I didn’t make my culture or my society, but they run my life and dictate my tastes and values as if they own me. I chase the same hopes as others and get much the same deal they all get.”

John realised with disgust that other people had set the pace, set the course, trained his thinking, set up the global context, and, like it or not, each past event led to another and will keep on doing so.

## **Despair**

John grabbed his pad and tried to describe his despair.

“Life is not a series of random events like beads strung randomly at a whim. Life is a series of events spawned by previous events, which spawn further events yet. Each event, each decision, each argument, each choice between one thing and the other, channels our life into courses over which we have no control.”

As he wrote one more line he shuddered deep within: “Ultimate powerlessness – how vain it all is!”

“Surely life is not blind fate!” he protested. “Surely I can be in control!”

He longed for the naive ignorance of yesterday, when he could believe his own delusions and assure himself he was special. He ached to return to blissful blindness, where realities don’t intrude and disturb the simple mind.

John stared across the neighbourhood, asleep under the dim yellow streetlights. “All those poor suckers have no idea they are on a treadmill they did not make!”

## **Solomon’s Sight Part Five Choice**

### **Loose Thread**

*“The lazy man will not plough because it is cold:*



*therefore he will beg in harvest and have nothing.”*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 20:4*

A loose thread teased John’s mind. The idea of fate as a steam-roller didn’t account for everything. He struggled to grasp that dangling thought and discover where it led.

A crop grows. Fate dictates if it is good or bad, or destroyed by insect or fire. Yet someone had to plant it. Once planted the farmer had to watch over it or neglect it. The harvesting had to be done. And the doing of each of those things was not a matter of fate, but of human choice.

Solomon spoke of such things. He told of a lazy man who would not plough in the cold weather so had to beg for food at harvest time. Man is not a complete victim of the rolling course of events.

We get to steer the steam-roller!

Yes, some events are beyond our power, but every day in a thousand little ways we get to steer the course. If we want friends we must show ourselves friendly. If we associate with angry people we become like them. If we sow seed we get a crop. We even get to choose what seed we sow. If we listen to wisdom we become wise.

## **Take Control**

John sat forward and grabbed his pad again. This time he scribbled over his thoughts about powerlessness and wrote again “One Thing Leads to Another!”

“I get to do the one thing that leads to the next, so I determine what it is”, he muttered to himself. Hope danced through his limbs and he could have jumped about. A feeling of power and control stimulated him.

“I choose which job I apply for. I choose to work hard or be lazy. I choose to listen or to ignore. It’s up to ME!”

He startled himself with his shout and immediately fell silent to see if he woke Jenny in the next room.

Settling to quieter musings he sat with smug pleasure that his life was not out of control. Sure he had made bad choices, but he had made some good ones too. And sure he was dropped into a swirling current and there are a bunch of things he can’t control, but there are many things he can control. It’s his role in life to control them and to make wise choices.

“One thing leads to another”, he admitted, “but I can choose to do good things that lead to better things. I can take control of the future for me and my family.”

It was good to once again feel like master of his own destiny. But this time it wasn’t the foolish ignorance of the uninformed, but a profound insight from the wisest man that ever lived.

John felt wonderfully relieved and completely reassured, and in that happy frame of mind he drifted off to sleep.

## **What Has He Done?**

Jenny found John asleep over his notepad and urged him to get going for the day. She wondered if he was having a breakdown.

Or, worse, if he knew he was dying. After all, he had begun to be more caring of late as often happens when someone knows they have limited time.

She wished she could talk with him.

“Every time I start a conversation he reacts”, she reflected.

“He claims it’s my manner, but I think he’s too stressed and touchy.”

She saw on John’s notepad “One Thing Leads to Another”.

“What has he done?” she wondered.

She realised again how much she had lost touch with her husband.

In many ways he wasn’t the man she wanted him to be so she pulled back.

“Maybe he needs me.”

Self reflection led on to other thoughts. “Maybe we are in this mess because of me. Maybe if I was different our marriage would have turned out different.”

Jenny shivered at feeling she might be wrong so quickly dropped the idea and buried herself in the day’s work.

She liked work. It helped her forget other things.

## **We Choose**

John continued digging through Solomon’s writings but now searched for one main thing. What did Solomon say about how “One Thing Leads to Another”?

He was not disappointed. Right in the first chapter Solomon describes wisdom calling to simple people to pay attention. If they seek wisdom they are blessed but if they reject it they suffer.

With that John’s chest heaved a great sigh of relief.

It is as he suspected. “One Thing Leads to Another” is not a fatalistic curse but a key to unlock the future.

Right choices us to good things. Wrong choices channel our future to bad outcomes.

One way or other “One Thing Leads to Another”.

The good news is we choose what we do so we choose the outcome.

For the next few days John positively buzzed with excitement.

He now grasped one of wisdom’s essential keys.

“I am master of my destiny by making right choices”, John enthused.

He could not only impact the present, but his actions, his good actions that is, would keep unfolding into the future, even after he is long gone. He had seen it from the mountain.

John sat up late that night and found two more illustrations from Proverbs that show how “One Thing Leads to Another”.

Solomon warned his son to avoid people intent on easy gain at the expense of others. It is a bad connection that leads to bad outcomes.

Solomon also warned against immorality. That outcome is really nasty.

## **Oops!**

John struggled to sleep that night so he slipped out of bed and perched himself in a chair again, looking out across the neighbourhood. There he reflected on those two serious warnings.

John hadn't actually joined a gang of murderous exploiters but he had done a number of things that hurt others. He had been drawn into get rich schemes several times and some of those schemes took advantage of others.

One time he helped get someone sacked by making a series of complaints. The man didn't deserve to go but he wasn't liked and John was as happy to get rid of him as anyone else. That move led to a few people getting promoted.

On occasions that memory made John's stomach feel sick.

Moral temptation also came his way. He liked it when a woman dressed indiscreetly or flirted with him.

He made it his policy to always take Jenny with him to parties simply because he knew how easily he could be distracted by a sexy woman. For all his faults he really did want his marriage to work and he had seen talented men trash their marriage and family because they would not control their passions.

"Wow! That's a bad outcome if ever I saw it", he thought. "Some top guys are struggling with life despite their great career achievements just because they wanted to chase a bit of skirt."

Deep inside he was thankful for a mum and dad who were very strict about morals and who put the fear of God into him, so to speak. Whatever God might do, John knew his father would just about tear him apart if John was immoral.

"Wow! Meeting Solomon is giving me a new appreciation for my strict mum and dad." He would like his kids to know that same experience. Maybe they would one day appreciate him more too.

## **Unhappy Memories**

John couldn't remember how his thoughts rambled from there but eventually unhappy memories crept into mind.

Many of his decisions, doing that 'one thing' that led to other things, were not good decisions. They were hasty, or driven by selfishness, frustration, pride or other human weakness.

Increasingly his mind was assaulted with images of arguments with Jenny, disapproval from parents, deals gone sour, friendships damaged, children discouraged and victories emptied of their glow.

The tragic snake incident wasn't the only stupid thing he had done. Those other awful moments flashed past to taunt him.

His heart thumped as the awful truth that "One Thing Leads to Another" pressed upon him.

As master of his own destiny he had set so many wrong things in motion it was absolutely horrible to consider. He had set many steam-rollers in motion that trampled most of his hopes and dreams.

Fate was not his enemy. He was.

His own choices, whether he knew they were choices or not, doing that 'one thing that leads to another', were the cause of so many of his problems.

He slumped with his head in his hands, ashamed of the man he was and the damage he had done.

And that's how Jenny found him in the morning, fuelling her fears and making her all the more aware of how poorly she knew him and how shallow her commitment to him was.

## Seeing Consequences

John was stuck in traffic when his next burst of insight struck him. He wasn't consciously thinking about Proverbs, paying attention, consequences and all that, but maybe his subconscious was busy processing things without him knowing.

What suddenly made perfect sense was that Solomon's Sight is the ability to see consequences.

John thought of how the old man on the mountain looked young at the same time, and looked regal and humble and unapproachable and welcoming all at the same time. A kind of super sight could take in all that contradictory information at the one moment.

And that's what wisdom sees. It sees the present situation and the various options before it, but it also sees the consequences each option leads to.

Each choice leads inevitably to a whole sequence of ripples, each one a consequence of the other. Wisdom can see where those ripples go and knows what leads to good outcomes and what leads to bad results.

Our eye sees the food but wisdom sees our health, our weight, what our body needs, what is good and what is bad for us. Cheating on our health now means a tougher time ahead, to lose the weight, clean our system, or even to survive a disease.

The same is true for those intangible things too. Giving in to anger now means having an anger issue to deal with tomorrow. Breaking a promise, lying, lusting or cheating all cost us dearly in the long run.

"If only I had seen the consequences years ago", John lamented.

## Quick Fix Failures

From that moment on the whole world of consequences came alive to John. He certainly couldn't see the future like he did on the mountain, but he was acutely aware of the continuing ripples of choices he had made and was making.

He was particularly conscious of so many times when he made hasty choices based on short term gains. He had told lies to get around a tight spot. But those lies often rolled on until they rolled back on top of him.

"Well John told me it was so", someone would say, and others would know that it was a lie. John would have to dig himself out of a bad situation.

Other times he would patch something up on the cheap only to pay much more than the cost of a proper job.

John loved to get out of responsibilities, cut corners, avoid the heavy lifting, leave the paperwork unfinished and so on, if it saved him time and inconvenience.

Time and time again deals fell over, protections that should have been in place were missing, costs were bumped up, trust was lost and friendship damaged, simply because he could not be trusted to do things right. Even his career had suffered when his supervisors realised he didn't finish things properly. Jenny had lost trust in him too. For all he knew his kids had already tuned into his limitations.

Wisdom does not buy the quick fix. Wisdom respects the need to do things right, with the right attitude, the right responsibility, the right commitment, the right effort and the right results.

“Do it right first time” became a subconscious motto as John felt the weight of consequences pressing on his life.

## **Caught Cheating**

One painful memory that really stung on the point of consequences was the time he cheated on an assignment. He didn't get around to his college assignment for a subject he really didn't like.

Close to the deadline he decided to get a friend whose older brother had done the same assignment the previous year to pass on the brother's work notes. John was rewarded with a copy of a completed assignment the friend found in his brother's files, exactly on the topic.

With a bit of dressing up John had a pretty good looking assignment to hand in a day before the deadline.

Several other students had to get extensions so John looked good for a while. But then the hammer fell.

It turned out the material John relied on was a draft assignment written by the lecturer several years earlier and given to the students as a guide, so the cheating was spotted easily and John was failed on the spot. But it didn't stop there. John was required to resit the entire subject the following year, and his cheating was widely known across the campus.

It was not fun meeting new people who asked, “Aren't you the guy who got caught cheating?”

The impact was wide sweeping and cost him dearly in reputation, friendships, academic penalties, distrust from the college staff, heavy scrutiny of all his other work, delay in finishing his course and added costs.

Instead of cheating he could easily have asked for an extension and he could have done the work he was supposed to do. His hunger for an easy way out cost him dearly.

He felt the deepest cut when parents of a girl he wanted to impress told her to keep well away from him because he was a cheat. It's hard to live down that kind of reputation.

## **Solomon's Sight Part Six Diligence**

### **Copy the Ants**

*“Go to the ant, you lazy man; consider her ways, and be wise.”*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 6:6*

An unexpected benefit of digging for wisdom emerged when John finally found time to repair the front fence. A simple picket fence originally decorated the front yard but became overgrown and broken down over the years.

John’s way was to put things off, hoping for a solution that didn’t cost time, money and effort. With wisdom now tapping on his shoulder, as it were, he knew he had to take responsibility and finally do something.

John was humbled by Solomon’s commendation of ants, aware that, compared to them, he was a lazy, slothful man.

He determined to do this job himself, and decided to make it a project to share with his children. It would be an adventure. Over a few days John talked up the excitement of pulling down the old fence and the wonder of creating a new one all by themselves. He talked about hammer and nails, sawing wood and painting as if they were privileges even kings hoped to enjoy. The kids didn’t buy it, but their interest was at least slightly warmed by all his effort.

Early Saturday morning he pulled the children out of bed and had breakfast ready, but not to be eaten until they destroyed the old fence. It took them less than an hour to knock over the old posts, dig out the overgrown bushes and pile up the rubbish in a huge heap.

They then enjoyed a hearty cooked breakfast which Jenny came out to eat with them, having been woken by the children’s noises in the front yard.

Back in the yard the children learned how to lay out the posts the right distance apart, measure the right spot and dig the holes, mix a batch of cement and get the main posts set in place.

The horizontal timbers went in next, then out came the long string that told them the height of each picket. They even had spacer blocks so the pickets were the right distance apart.

Of course, there were splinters and bent nails, some clumsy work that had to be redone, and no shortage of tears and tempers at times. But the work proceeded and a growing sense of excitement grew as a lovely, fresh little fence came together from their efforts.

Neighbours stopped to commend their work, give unwanted advice, or make good natured jibes about child-slave labour. There was a general happy buzz about the whole morning and it really did turn out to be an adventure kings would have enjoyed.

By lunch time the whole fence was complete, much to John’s delight. Jenny came out and photographed the proud construction crew.

With so much achieved so quickly John decided to leave the painting for another day and drive them to the park to celebrate their great achievement.

As they pulled back into the yard hours later the children looked in awe at what they had done just that morning.

“We did good, didn’t we daddy”, a small voice spoke their shared feelings.

“Yes, we did good”, John agreed. “You were all great today. Thanks for putting in so well.”

There were proud and happy smiles all round.

John was last inside that afternoon, taking time first to run his hands along the top of the pickets and drink in the wonderful feelings this achievement provided.

“Hard work never hurt anyone”, he recalled someone saying once. He had not believed it, but today it was wonderfully true. It really didn’t hurt to rise early and work hard. The unexpected payoff was the sheer delight of having done a good job and achieved so much so easily. The family

enjoyed the buzz of that lovely feeling many times over just by remembering what they accomplished that Saturday morning.

That was a turning point for a man much inclined to be easy on himself and avoid a hard day's work. From then on John and his children each found occasions to recreate that good feeling from jobs completed.

John took his list of unwanted chores and began to get them done, often with his children helping, delighting in every job done, every item ticked off and every proof of his new ability to take action without being afraid of work.

Jenny was delighted with this new fruit of John's obsession. He gradually became more diligent at things she previously nagged him about. He was increasingly a man she felt proud of.

"Wisdom is so amazing", John mused. "Someone points to the ants and it changes my whole life. Wisdom can take the simplest things to create profound effect."

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*"Go to the ant you sluggard;  
consider her ways, and be wise:  
With no guide, overseer or ruler,  
She provides her meat in the summer,  
and gathers her food in the harvest.  
How long will you sleep, O sluggard?  
When will you rise out of your sleep?  
By a little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to sleep  
So will your poverty come like a traveller,  
and your need like an armed man."*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 6:6-11*

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## **Diligence**

*"If you see someone diligent about their business  
that person will end up standing before kings;  
and won't have to do the bidding of meaningless people."*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 22:29*

Once John started getting things done his attention kept being caught by the topic of diligence and reliability. All too often he had made empty promises about doing something or getting around to it one day. Far too often he simply forgot his promise the moment he turned away.

Now John saw that this was not only an insult to those he made promise to, but he was cutting himself off at the legs each time. Instead of developing diligence that would promote him in more than just employment, he was eating holes in his character.

Joking that he was “born lazy” didn’t make up for his inability to get things done or to be ally and asset to those who needed his help. As John pushed past that silly excuse, and started working on the hard yards to get things done, he was delighted to sense the genuineness in those who complimented and thanked him.

That was a window into simplicity for John. Solomon’s reflections about the simple loving simplicity sat unexplained for a long time. Once John could experience life at a deeper level, with the wonderful acceptance offered him in his dream, the rich rewards of getting things done, and exposure of the emptiness of spouted opinions, he could see how simple his perceptions had once been.

The simple person is ignorant of all they are missing and just blunder on in their simplicity. They find it easy to scoff at those taking life more seriously, or who take time to learn and work on things. It is easy for them to shun input, because they can’t see value in it.

Now that diligence was on his radar it, or its opposite, blipped at him everywhere he looked, especially in Solomon’s instructions.

John now accepted as fact Solomon’s assertions that diligent work will make you rich and promote you and that when you are diligent your plans become more productive. He realised too that diligence is not just being busy, but paying attention to things, anticipating problems before they happen, doing preventative maintenance and a quality control check to be sure everything is okay.

The best payoff of all wasn’t John’s new way of seeing things, or his new capacity to get things done, or even Jenny being less titchy about things, but that wisdom proved to be true.

He had often wished for a role that payed more and gave a few more perks, but was always overlooked. Now he knew why. He wouldn’t have done the job well.

When one of the bosses came by and asked John if he’d like to be considered for promotion, without John even seeking it, that gave a pretty good buzz. He was soon promoted to the post, without an interview and as the company’s first choice. That’s when John’s meeting with the man on the mountain really began paying off in significant ways.

## **The Long View**

John’s day was a little unsteady. Several times, quite unexpectedly, he had a sudden giddy spell. He immediately realised what it was. He wasn’t ill. He felt fine. What made him woozy were flashbacks to that mountaintop dream.

At random times during the day John suddenly felt as if he was sweeping down the mountainside or across a stream, or soaring high into the air for a time-lapse view of history.

One or twice he even chuckled as he reached out to steady himself.

He was asked “You OK?” several times and assured people he was fine.

He was pretty excited about what he had dug up already and was almost coasting on the gains made so far. That was his style, to only work as hard at something as he had to. Now he did that with the wisdom he had so eagerly sought only a few months earlier.

Was this strange sensation a reminder that he had to keep searching?



At afternoon break he went and sat in the sun, closed his eyes and recaptured the sweeping flight sensation.

“What am I missing?” he asked himself as his body delighted in the memories.

Then he caught it.

In the dream things distant and blurred came into focus to his soaring Solomon Sight. His eyes virtually telescoped into the distance and into the future. He was able to see things far away as if close at hand.

He suddenly sat forward and announced to himself, “It’s short term versus long term”.

He grabbed a notepad.

“Short term sight doesn’t see the long term effect. It can’t see the consequences or the many contributing factors.”

“Long term sight inspects the landscape and sees the long term impacts of one thing leading to another.”

John once heard class distinction described as nothing more than how far ahead people would focus. Some don’t see past their next meal, while others plan for generations. John had rejected that, since he basically lived from day to day. Yet now it made more sense.

John’s life was consumed with things of the day: transient amusements, food, issues in the media, popular topics and how he felt at the time. These ephemeral things, lasting only for the moment, were forgotten with the new dawn.

He wondered how far ahead one could see and determined that eternity was about as far as you could get.

He wrote ‘Eternal - Not Ephemeral’ to prompt him to think in the longest possible terms, not just on the impulse of the moment.

## Seeing as Solomon Sees

*“A prudent man foresees danger and protects himself:  
but the simple walk on and suffer harm.”  
Solomon - Book of Proverbs 22:3*

“Solomon’s Sight sees the landscape”, John enthused to Jenny.

She had turned down an invitation, to be home with John. Somehow she had to bridge the gulf between them. Bravely she asked him to catch her up on what his dream was doing to him.

She actually resented the dream, if truth were told. Her husband was far more engaged with a mere dream than with her, his flesh and blood wife. Yet she also knew he was changing and for the better. All his reading and thinking made a difference, so maybe she owed it to him to share this strange process.

“If we have the eyes of wisdom we know what is going on around us and why. We can foresee the danger. We won’t get tripped up by unexpected things.”

She listened patiently, not for his explanation, but as a small gift of herself to the man she hoped to reconnect with.

“And Solomon’s Sight sees how what we do keeps impacting the future. One thing leads to another. True wisdom sees that and makes decisions informed by that reality.”

“Solomon has this great description”, he enthused. “A wise man sees the evil coming and avoids it but the simple go straight on and get clobbered.”

Evangelistic fervour had his arms and face emphasising every point.

Jenny smiled to see him so fired up again.

“Doesn’t that make sense?” He asked, uncertain of her responses.

“It sure makes sense to you”, she chuckled. “I haven’t seen you this lit up since that oil deal you got into.”

“Don’t bring that one up. That’s a sore point for me.” His tone darkened.

“Well I told you it was a scam, but you wouldn’t have it.” She wasn’t rebuking him. She was still laughing at seeing him so animated.

He took her hand and peered into her face. “You’re right. I should have listened. You are a very important part of my landscape.”

She blurted a snort of laughter, leaving John bemused.

“I’m no tree or rock on your landscape. I’m your wife!”

“It’s coming out wrong, but I really do value you. I haven’t valued you enough. Would you forgive me?”

Jenny felt awkward. She had let him down badly and here he was asking to be forgiven. She withdrew her hand and slipped away to busy herself with whatever she could find.

## **Solomon’s Sight Part Seven Helping Others**

### **Step Upward**

“I think I can see what’s going on”, John said to his young associate.

John certainly could see. When another blowup happened that morning, with both Ken and the supervisor losing their tempers, John was tempted to just lie low and let it pass, as usual. Cocky young men came and went in this workplace and there was no use getting too sentimental about it. This time, however, John could SEE what was going on. With the seeing came a strong urge to get to Ken before he, like many others before him, was given his marching orders.

“Up hill or down hill? That’s what it’s all about! I want you to see what you’re doing and what’s happening to you.” John challenged. Ken wasn’t in the mood for a lecture, especially from one of the guys, so he shrugged it off, but not completely. He hadn’t yet heard where John was going, so he acted disinterested, while waiting to see what came next.

“Ken, every decision you make is not just about that moment. It impacts you long after you forget about it.”

The young man was smart at his work but his attitude was a real problem. Attitude often got in the way and now his job was on the line. John wanted to see if Ken was open to wisdom or not. If not, John would let things take their course.

“Ken, if you take a step up the hill you will move ahead, but if you take a step downhill you only make it hard for yourself. It’s only a step whichever way you go. You choose if it’s in the right direction or not.” John was pleading, partly because he knew how high the stakes were for Ken, but also because he had once been in Ken’s place. It is easy to be led by ego and stumble from one mess to another.

“Ken, the boss is the boss. You didn’t hire him, he hired you! You don’t get to tell him what to do, but he gets to tell you what to do. That’s how it works, or you don’t work!”

“The boss is an idiot!” Ken responded.

“Then how is it he runs the company and drives a nice car and built a good business in such a competitive market?” John struggled to open Ken’s eyes.

“He didn’t do it. We do that for him. He’s getting rich off all our hard work.”

John pulled back for a moment. The sound of Ken’s scoffing was a blast of cold air. Scorn rang loud and clear.

Solomon says a lot about people who think they are better than others, holding others in contempt. Those attitudes are pretty hard to break. Solomon says it’s better to get rid of someone like that, so strife will settle down.

“Ken,” John continued after a pause, taking a new tack, “what’s going on inside your head? You sound like someone with a chip on his shoulder.” Ken didn’t respond, so John dug a little harder. In John’s mind he saw himself trying to uncover something important that had been buried. And John payed close attention. He sensed Ken’s issue wasn’t really with the boss, but much deeper and more serious.

“I think you are meant for better than this.” John was amazed at the caring tone coming out of him. “You’re feeling ashamed, aren’t you?”

“I don’t need to be working for a bunch of jerks!” Ken exploded as he pulled himself away. John took a deep breath and waited through another silence before continuing.

## **Reaching the Scorer**

“You’re a pretty smart guy, Ken. You have a whole lot going for you. I wish I had the talents and brains you have. But what’s happening now is a test. It’s not a test of your intelligence, or of your skill at the job. It’s a test of what you are made of.” John paused to let that sink in before hitting Ken with the punch line.

“Right now, Ken, you are failing the test.”

Silence followed. John rode it patiently.

“What do you mean?” Ken’s question was low and guarded, but it was the tiny opening John hoped for. Again he took his time and as low-key as he could be began to point out to Ken the mess he was in.

“You’ve had some knocks along the way, Ken. Each time you made a choice about how to respond. Frankly, you made wrong choices. You chose to be angry and blame others. You chose to be hurt and you made promises to yourself about how you’ll prove yourself one day.” Ken’s silence suggested to John he was on the money, so he stuck with his explanation.

“Each time you make a choice you either bless yourself, by acting with character and wisdom, or you curse yourself, by giving in to selfishness, pride, hurt, anger and that kind of junk. Each time you choose badly it’s like planting a weed and those weeds choke your ability to make right choices for your future.” Again John paused to see how he was tracking. Ken’s silence encouraged John to quietly press on.

“If you don’t make a wise choice now, heaven knows if you’ll ever be able to make one for the rest of your life. You are hurting and angry. You blame others for your messed up feelings. But right now, if you make a wise choice, just one step in the right direction, it won’t solve all your problems, but it will get you moving out of the mess you are in.”

John stopped right there, amazed he could say all that with no outburst from Ken. So they just sat, each staring into nothing, while John wondered what would happen next. The next step was Ken’s, not his.

Finally a faint voice made its way out of Ken’s almost closed lips, “Like what?”

John let out a long sigh at hearing Ken’s tentative openness, but steadied himself and kept his low-key tone going.

“You need to keep this job. I’m sure Samantha doesn’t want you fired again. So, just cool it. Put all your personal feelings aside and prove you can suck it in, and do what you have to do, despite how you feel. Accept that the boss is the boss. If he wants you to do things the wrong way round, then just do it. They’re not paying you to run the company, but they won’t pay you at all if you can’t do what they ask.” John peered at Ken so the young man knew he expected an answer. A few moments later there was one slight nod.

“I think you should apologise for getting worked up today. Tell your supervisor you are sorry and you want to keep your job and you want to turn over a new leaf.” Again John waited for Ken to respond. Another faint nod.

“And put on a new attitude right now. Your mission is to keep this job. Whatever it takes you want to get to the end of the month still working here. Tell Samantha that’s your plan. If you can actually achieve that then you have hope. If you get yourself fired then you know what that says about you.”

John arrived home worn out. He had never challenged someone like that before, but he had never had such wisdom before. What surprised him is how the conversation sucked all the energy out of him, more than pulling an all-nighter.

The next day Ken was still out of sorts and still ready to mouth off more than he should. John didn’t know how well the young man had followed his advice and he didn’t want to pry, so he just

let the thing ride. Wisdom calls to people every day but it is up to each one to listen. Time would tell if Ken had the right kind of ears and eyes.

Three weeks later John found a note pinned on his notice board. It simply said, “New month. Still Here!” With that John felt a gush of joy. He closed his eyes and imagined the face of old Solomon. Nodding to his mountaintop mentor, he whispered, “We did it!”

## **Jenny’s Turn**

Jenny welcomed Ken and Samantha at the door and led them to the patio for refreshments. It was a lovely sunny spot with a full view of the yard where the children were distracted with various activities.

John joined the guests as soon as he had the BBQ lit.

Jenny sat and unconsciously wrung her hands. This was all very new to her and she really hoped it wouldn’t be too difficult. She felt trapped by a chain of events that caught her in its vortex.

The annual works party was just a few days before and she went along as John’s wife, known to many of the longer term employees. She met several newer folk and was settling in to a pleasant night when Samantha approached and introduced herself.

“You’re John’s wife, aren’t you?” That’s how Jenny was known around this crowd. The pretty girl in front of her was a little too anorexic for Jenny’s liking, but seemed perfectly nice.

“I want to thank you for what you’ve done for Ken”, Samantha said, almost choking on the words. Jenny did her best to hide the shock. She hadn’t heard much of Ken and certainly didn’t think she’d done anything to help. Samantha didn’t notice but pressed on with her rehearsed speech.

“I just can’t believe the change in him. I used to cry myself to sleep, you know.”

Actually Jenny didn’t know, and didn’t have a clue what this was all about.

“But now, well, it’s sort of, I mean, I just want to say how much this all means to me.” With that Samantha’s tears flowed freely.

Jenny steered Samantha to a quiet corner, gave her a cloth and tried to settle her, still completely oblivious to what this was all about. Once Samantha settled she hit Jenny with a question.

“Would you and John be willing to help me too?” Samantha’s eyes pleaded for a positive response.

Jenny opened her mouth but couldn’t decide what to say. Should she admit she didn’t have a clue what this was all about, or should she act as if she did? What in the world would she be getting herself into if she said ‘Yes’? What in the world was John up to now that pretty young things are asking for his help? That last thought gave her the energy to respond.

“Of course. We’d love to help.” Jenny’s voice was full of assurance and composure, but her mind was resolute. By saying ‘Yes’ she would find out exactly what her husband was up to now.

John later explained the Ken lecture and how the boy had managed to keep the job for two months and was settling down for the long haul. But what Samantha wanted was as big a mystery to John as to Jenny.

## **Samantha**

Some food consumed, drinks shared and the sun a little lower in the sky and it was Samantha’s time to speak. Three people were eager to find out what was going on, Ken included.

“I know I’ve said it already, John and Jenny, but you two have been like angels, really like ...”

Samantha struggled to stop the tears. Everyone had to wait, uncomfortable as it was.

“John, what you said to Ken really helped him. I mean it helped us both. I was so thrilled when he told me he was going to keep this job. He’s never been like that before.” She gave him a sideways look, as if apologising for talking about him.

“He told me what you said about making wrong choices that mess you up on the inside. And I know all about that. God knows I’ve made so many dumb choices and I gave up ever hoping I’d get out of the hole.” She looked down but didn’t cry this time. She was ashamed and had resigned herself to a life of defeat.

Suddenly looking up at John she picked up the pace, “That’s why what you said to Ken really hit me. And you gave Ken the chance to go in the right direction. I mean, I’ve never seen him do that before. And, well, that kind of turned on a light inside me. I want to start going the right way too, like you and Jenny. Will you help me?” This last question was directed at both John and Jenny, as Samantha turned her intense gaze from face to face. Jenny squirmed, but tried her very best to hide it.

John saved the day. “Samantha, we are really honoured that you would ask us to help. And we’re humbled by it too. I mean we’re just an ordinary couple and we haven’t worked everything out yet. I don’t know how much help we can give.”

Samantha struggled with this response. She hoped with all inside her she had finally found people who could turn her life around. There was nowhere else to turn and she didn’t want to go back to her black hole of hopelessness.

“We can help you take some small steps in the right direction”, John reassured her. And with that her face brightened wonderfully. “It’s about taking a step up the hill or down the slippery slope. It’s about doing things that lead to good, instead of things that lead to trouble.”

Samantha wasn’t really listening by this point. Tears poured down her cheeks and she was rocking slightly in her chair, trying to stop herself from dissolving completely. Jenny rose and put her arms around her and then the floodgates opened.

Ken was completely out of his depth, so just sat there. John and Jenny were completely out of their depth, but Jenny knew how to show care, and John knew he had an ally on the mountain, who truly understood wisdom. Together this ramshackle team could begin to cut an upward path for a pretty young lady who needed help.

## **Changing the Past**

As a supervisor Jenny not only commanded more authority but also earned more than John, though she never made anything of it. She was just more suited to taking authority and organising people than John and that moved her ahead.

She also liked being busy and that always paid off at work.

Today she was busier than usual and a little short with anyone who interrupted her. She wanted various thoughts excised from her mind, while the energy of her emotions gave her more push than normal.

Jenny argued to herself how absurd it was that she should have to apologise and she wasn't going to do it. Samantha may need to do such things, but not Jenny. Jenny the defiant one. Jenny who had her own issues to deal with and who dealt with them perfectly well.

So what if Samantha had made bad choices in her past and needed to get herself sorted out. So what if Samantha needed to contact her parents and apologise for all the terrible things she said and did. That didn't mean Jenny had to do any such things. Jenny was perfectly within her rights to do and say what she did, and she wouldn't believe otherwise.

Yet the thoughts persisted. Memories of resisting her father, defying her mother, hurting her siblings, cutting her own short cuts where she chose, and living life her own way without apology and without consideration for others.

That was fine as far as she could see, until Samantha, and until John explained consequences. John told Samantha, and Jenny had heard it all for the first time, that, "What we do doesn't just affect that moment, but the ripples keep on rippling long into the future." That's how he applied it to Samantha's foolish decisions and the long term price she was still paying.

"Was there a long term price for being independent?" Jenny challenged herself while trying to avoid the answer. She already knew there was. She was not only independent, just the way she wanted to be, but she was also incapable of forming close relationships. One thing led to another, as John put it, and the other that goes with independence is isolation.

It didn't stop there. She had sensed for a long time how she simply didn't have the capacity to be close to her own children and husband. That kind of closeness wasn't in her makeup. What she now saw with dismay was that her own children were following her selfish ways. They too were increasingly independent, and increasingly incapable of being warm to her and each other.

She had made choices and those choices, made years ago, cursed her right now, despite her being a wife, mother and supervisor. Worse still, her choices decades ago had somehow taken root in her own precious children, trapping them into the same pattern that enslaved her.

With each invasion of these ugly thoughts a new burst energised her movements and mood. She was on edge, fighting with thoughts too deep to utter and too terrifying to face, yet too real to ignore.

If John was talking with her instead of Samantha he would say something like, "You have to take a step in the other direction. It doesn't matter how small the step, you have to reverse the wrong." And that would mean apologising to her parents for being so stubbornly independent. It would mean apologising to her siblings for all she put them through. It would mean allowing herself to be vulnerable, and allowing herself to care and allowing herself to not be number one in all her plans and calculations.

No wonder her palms were wet. This cut close to the core of her whole being.

## **One Small Step**

"One small step, eh?" Jenny muttered to herself as she breezed into the weekly briefing session. She looked at the dozen faces poised for her reports and instructions and cleared her throat.

"Before we get into the nuts and bolts today I'd like to share something of a personal note." She made this sound as planned as all the other things she did so well. "We are a team. And, I think I've been letting the team down." She gave them an imperious look and they all just watched attentively, not sure where this was going.

“I’m not much of a listener, am I?” She tried to say this with a smile, but it fell a bit flat. Eyeing the room and seeing their bemused expressions she did what John would have done, playing the humour card. Looking at the joker in the group she added, “I thought surely I’d get an ‘Amen’ out of you Tom.” With that everyone smiled and relaxed a little.

“I don’t want this team to be all about business. We’re already good at that. For this team to do better we have to add something more. That ‘something more’ is a more friendly tone. It’s my mission, difficult as it will be for my personality, to lighten our tone.” There were some supportive smiles, but a whole lot of uncertainty as well.

“Here’s what we’ll do. It’s just a small step in the right direction, but it will start to make a difference. Every time we get too intense about our work you all have my permission to tell me, or anyone else in the team, to ‘Lighten Up!’” She eyed them all very seriously before adding, “Got that?” They nodded just as seriously.

“Ok, then”, she continued. “Now that you know what I’m talking about, ‘Lighten Up’. And that’s an order.” Jenny knew it was a pretty clumsy start, however she had taken a first step and that’s what wisdom requires, a series of steps in the right direction, so the right consequences follow in their time.

The much harder step came later that day, sitting in her office, palms sweating as she reached for the phone and dialled her father’s number.

## Changing Seasons

*“To everything - turn, turn, turn  
There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
And a time to every purpose under heaven”  
Pete Seeger - 1959  
Solomon - 950 BC - Ecclesiastes 3:1*

John loved raking over Solomon’s writings including another book called Ecclesiastes. Here he came across words popularised in song.

He asked around at work if anyone had heard that there’s a season for everything.

“Turn, Turn, Turn”, was the shorthand reply from several voices.

“Yes, that’s it.” John enthused. “Did you know that was from the wisest man that ever lived?”

“Peter, Paul or Mary?” Someone joked and got a laugh from others.

“Wisdom may be beyond the reach of some of us”, John chided, “but it’s from Solomon.”

No-one seemed to care where it came from and they turned the conversation to sport and politics, the economy and the latest hot topic in the media. This was the stuff of modern culture, not wisdom. John was in dismay as he realised again that people don’t want to talk about wisdom, let alone dig for it.

He remembered how wisdom calls for people’s attention all day every day, and people just walk past without caring. He wondered how it was that he, so much a part of his culture, had heard the call when so many ignore it. “I guess it was that dream”, he mused.

Despite disinterest from others John kept going back to the idea of seasons. He sensed there was something important there for his own wisdom journey, so he kept raking over the idea that there is



a time to plant and a time to reap, a time to laugh and a time to cry. There is a season for everything.

Bit by bit insights fitted together in his mind, like pieces of a puzzle coming together in chunks. The memory of watching history unfold in his dream also helped.

“Nothing lasts” he realised. “No matter how good or bad things are, they will change. You can’t count on things trundling along as they always have. Seasons change.”

It wasn’t the most profound realisation, but he ticked it off in his mind as at least one lesson to take note of.

“Everything has its turn.” Now that was a bit more disturbing. Death would have its turn, and war would have its turn, no matter how much John wanted to avoid both. The time would come for pulling down all he had built, maybe to build something new, or maybe just to get his poor work out of everyone’s way so something better could replace it.

“The seasons humble us”, he realised. “All our hopes and dreams are subject to seasons.” Here he let out a long breath, as if letting go on the inside. Life is not about fighting the seasons, but understanding them and flowing with them. This seemed to diffuse the urge to strive against the tide. Life could be so much easier for the wise, than for those fools who try to change the unchangeable.

“What season am I in now?” John mused. He was building a life for himself and his children. His natural energies were focused on getting ahead, amassing assets, proving himself and climbing as high as he could. Yet the call to wisdom hinted at a higher course. Maybe this wasn’t a season for proving himself, but for ‘improving’ himself. Maybe gaining wisdom and learning to love his wife and kids, teaching them to be wise too, was far more valuable than trinkets that rust and go out of fashion.

With that reflection a strange sensation swept over him. Well, actually it swept ‘through’ him. It was like a breeze that not only blew onto his skin, but through his flesh to sweep over his inner being.

With the breeze came a sense of transfer, as if Solomon was breathing something of himself into John, but not for John to contain it, but to pass through John to others.

Was this a sign? John couldn’t get past the feeling his whole wisdom journey was not for himself but for others, especially his family.

“I’m in transfer season”, John whispered to himself, although he didn’t really know what that meant. That too was consistent with wisdom. Sometimes you ‘know’ something intuitively, but you just can’t find words to express it to anyone else. John just ‘knew’ he was in ‘transfer season’, whatever that was.

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*“To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:*

*A time to be born, and a time to die;*

*a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;*

*A time to kill, and a time to heal;*

*a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

*A time to weep, and a time to laugh;*

*a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

*A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones;  
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*

*A time to get, and a time to lose;  
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;  
A time to tear, and a time to sew,  
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;  
A time to love, and a time to hate;  
a time of war, and a time of peace.”*

*Solomon - Ecclesiastes 3:1-8*

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## **Solomon's Sight Part Eight For the Record**

**Writing it Down**

That night John sat over his notepad to summarise what he had learned. He felt he had discovered so much but putting words onto paper seemed so impotent. Jottings on a page couldn't convey the depth of meaning and impact that would be felt if the words were lived out in practice. He remembered once hearing that "Things are better felt than telt". He absolutely agreed.

Yet Solomon put his wisdom into words, poor as words may be, so John would do the same.

"Solomon's Sight - Wisdom Keys", he wrote atop the page.

"Pay Attention", was next. He was about to add, "Alert Ears - Big Beady Eyes", but realised he had to add more, to flesh it out, so it became, "Pay Attention - to Wisdom, to Instruction, to Responsibility, to what's Valuable not Trivial."

"Alert Ears - Listen to Wise Instruction."

"Big Beady Eyes - See the Big Picture - the Substance."

"Muti-Faculty - see and sense - tune in."

"Don't Tune Important Things Out."

It was a lot more detail than he liked, but this had been a big lesson for him, so he left it all on his page.

"Dig for Wisdom", was on the next key point. He added "Wisdom Fever" in the hope people would get the connection with persistent digging.

"Doing - Wisdom is Action" was an important note, since so many people think wisdom comes from a book, not from wise choice. "Do the Right Thing - take the right steps", he added to emphasise the point. Then adding a note he had made to himself early on he added, "Do it Right First Time."

"One Thing Leads to Another", was next and he underlined it to make sure this point was noted for its importance, adding the word "Consequences" to be sure people were alerted to how important they are. Then to emphasise this matter even more he added, "Ripples last Forever!"

John's next insight was "Take Control". This was the upside of consequences, so he added "Create Good Consequences".

He kept adding pointers for this process, from the little lectures he gave himself when tempted to give in and go the easy way.

"Say 'No' to Yourself. No Quick Fix. No Easy Way Out!"

"Step Upward - Avoid the Slippery Slope."

"Put Things Right - One Small Step - Stop the Bad Ripples". This pointed to going back to past mistakes and putting things right.

"Look to the Ants - Hard Work Works - Enjoy the Reward" were the words he chose to hit the high note of diligence and productivity. After that he had to add a promise from Solomon which John had seen work in Jenny's career, "The Diligent Get Promoted".

"Long Term View", was John's code for keeping an eye on the longest term consequences. The wisest people have the longest view and take steps that create the most powerful positive consequences for the longest possible effect. He added, "Eternal not Ephemeral".

"Seasons Change", finally summarised John's realisation that wisdom has to be dynamic, not just coasting in the comfort zone but foreseeing the changes and flowing with them, rather than being upset by them.

He paused, looking for words to summarise another key point. He knew it internally but didn't have words to summarise something so intangible. From that very first welcome on the mountain, to his dealings with Jenny, the children and others, John discovered a new kind of openness to

others. It was a welcome of incorporation and acceptance that was becoming a new way of life for him. Wisdom created it and probably demanded it, so what was it called?

Finally John wrote, "Give Grace - Make them Welcome." John knew that people don't deserve the best, but giving our best to others is a life changer, for them and for us. Solomon gave him his very best. That was grace if ever John had seen it. He was ever deeply thankful for getting what he didn't deserve.

That was it. It seemed ever so little. John shook his head in dismay as he put the pad on his bedside table, turned out the light and rolled into bed.

Before he could slip into slumber a disclaimer distilled in his mind and he rolled back out of bed to note it down.

"Read Proverbs for More". This was John's cop-out closer. He had only yet caught a small amount of the pearls Solomon offered. Anyone truly searching for wisdom needed much more than John's few scratched notes. It would be vain and dishonest to suggest otherwise.

And with that John was soon fast asleep.

## **John's Notepad**

### **Solomon's Sight - Wisdom Keys**

**Pay Attention - to Wisdom, to Instruction, to Responsibility,  
to what's Valuable not Trivial.**

**Alert Ears - Listen to Wise Instruction.**

**Big Beady Eyes - See the Big Picture - the Substance.  
Multi-Faculty - see and sense - tune in.  
Don't Tune Important Things Out.**

**Dig For Wisdom - Wisdom Fever.**

**Doing - Wisdom is Action  
Do the Right Thing - take the right steps.  
Do it Right First Time.**

**One Thing Leads to Another - Consequences.  
Ripples Last Forever.**

**Take Control - Create Good Consequences.  
Say 'No' to Yourself. No Quick Fix. No Easy Way Out.  
Step Upward - Avoid the Slippery Slope.  
Put Things Right - One Small Step - Stop the Bad Ripples.**

**Look at the Ants - Hard Work Works - Enjoy the Reward.  
The Diligent Get Promoted.**

**Long Term View.  
Eternal Not Ephemeral.**

**Seasons Change.**

**Give Grace - Make them Welcome.**

**Read Proverbs for More.**

**Solomon's Sight Part Nine  
Passing it On**

## Majesty Revisited

Glorious majesty impelled the summoned flame against the golden pavement. Consuming fire devoured and banished everything unworthy, instantly incinerating everything of self and pride. Yet the same overwhelming glory birthed life as quickly as it devoured flesh. True life, of that which is deathless, is constantly vitalised by the resplendent life-source.

There, between death and life, the magnificent flame lay breathless in the awesome presence.

“How have your dreams taken effect?” It was time to account for the audacious plan approved not so long ago.

“My Liege, he has begun to listen.” The words were barely breathed.

A smiling voice like the sound of rushing waters celebrated with, “Then grace has prevailed.”

“Grace always prevails”, the flame agreed.

Majesty changed tone. “Yet change is imminent. Will wisdom survive in his heart?”

The flame felt the agony of what was so soon to be. Humbly he offered the only answer truth could accept. “His father has imbibed it. His mother now drinks from its well. The whole family has seen its work. Surely with his parents’ example he will endure.”

“It depends on how he chooses, does it not?” The sombre tone was awesome in its insight.

“As always, my Lord.”

“Then do what is in your heart to do.” There was no need to explain the plan already known to he who knows all. “Grace will prevail.”

## Nightmare

John woke with a shudder, wet and cold with sweat. His heart pounded audibly at the terror he had seen. He stared into the darkness unable to drive the terrifying images out of mind.

There was a storm. A cataclysmic storm. Dark clouds overhead. A dark flood sweeping violently around him. Dark horrors screamed from somewhere below, eager to devour all around him.

There in the darkness John’s little boy stood lost, alone and afraid, clinging in fear to his satchel.

John called with all his might but the storm swallowed the words and the wind swept them away.

He wrestled with all his might to inch toward the lad but the powerful tide pulled him further away.

He tried everything he could do, desperate to reach that lonely, pain-filled waif and hold in his arms the tender life so unprepared to have his world torn apart.

As the tide swept John away the last he heard was his son crying, “Daddy!”

John rejected the dream. It was just a nightmare. He had nightmares as a child. This was just another. It didn’t mean a thing. Nothing was going to happen to him or his family.

Yet his pounding heart rejected such reassurance.

John feared not for himself. Overwhelming compassion was for his son. How could he be protected? How could John be there for one so helpless and unprepared?

This disturbed frame of mind held John captive in the dead of night, his heart refusing comfort.

Finally a solution settled on him. It may not be at all necessary, but it would ease his troubled mind.

He grabbed his page of wisdom notes. Creeping into the children’s room he observed the serene faces and heard the steady breathing. Surely nothing could disturb such sweet moments as these.

He found his son's satchel and quietly slipped the note pages among the books inside. Then he knelt and kissed the tender cheek. Surely nothing would ever happen to such beautiful children, he assured himself again.

At the door he turned again to reassure himself with the sight and sound of those sleeping lovelies. On impulse he moved quickly again to the satchel and pulled out his notes. In the half-light he grabbed a pencil and scrawled across the top of the page. For all he knew, if his nightmare was true, this may be the last message he ever gave. "My Son, pay attention."

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## *Epilogue*

*"My son, if you receive my words and keep my instructions, inclining your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you cry after knowledge and lift up your voice to understanding, if you seek her as silver and search for her as for hid treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*

*For the Lord gives wisdom: out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding,  
He stores up sound wisdom for the righteous: he protects those who walk uprightly.*

*He keeps the paths of judgment, and preserves the way of his saints.*

*Then you will understand righteousness, and judgment and equity:*

*yes, every good path.*

*Solomon - Book of Proverbs 2:1-9*

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## **King Rehoboam's Throne Room - 1,000 BC**

Solomon died and was buried in the city of David his father and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men who advised his father, and instead consulted with the young men he grew up with, young men who were scorners and fools.

The new king listened to his peers and so the magnificent Kingdom built by his grandfather David and ruled in splendour by his father Solomon was torn in two, with a mere remnant left in Rehoboam's hands.

Wisdom calls, but not all will listen.

"Are you paying attention, my son?"