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The Effects of a Wisdom Intervention in a Christian Congregation

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The Effects of a Wisdom Intervention in a Christian Congregation

by

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Presented to the Faculty of the
Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology

George Fox University

in partial fulfillment

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The Effects of a Wisdom Intervention in a Christian Congregation

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Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology

George Fox University

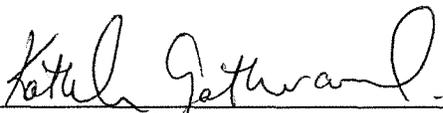
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The Effects of a Wisdom Intervention in a Christian Congregation

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Abstract

Psychological research on the topic of wisdom is limited in its incorporation of religion and spirituality. This gap in psychological literature may serve to limit a thorough understanding of wisdom, which has strong historical and contemporary links to religion and faith communities. Positive psychology, with its interest in both spirituality and wisdom, may allow for some rapprochement in wisdom and spirituality. In collaboration with leaders of a local Friends (Quaker) congregation, this study investigated the effects of a spiritually informed wisdom intervention delivered in the context of a faith community. Participants for the study consisted of 27 young adults (24 completed both the pre and post questionnaire) and a comparison group consisting of 32 young adults. The intervention was designed to increase participants' abilities in cognitive, affective and moral domains, all of which are essential to the development of wisdom. The cohorts met twice monthly over the course of 3 months and were given assignments between meetings to help promote wisdom. Significant group by time interaction effects were found among measurements of practical wisdom, postformal thinking,

and subjective well-being, with those in the experimental group showing changes in the expected direction. Implications are considered.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Positive psychology places wisdom within the domain of cognitive character strengths, along with creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness and love of learning (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In the positive psychology literature, wisdom is given the name “perspective” to distinguish it from traditional notions of wisdom that encompass a broader range of strengths and virtues. Perspective is a narrower form of wisdom and

refers to the ability to take stock of life in large terms, in ways that make sense to oneself and others. Perspective is the product of knowledge and experience, but it is more than the accumulation of information. It is the coordination of this information and its deliberate use to improve well-being. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 106)

In this sense, wisdom facilitates a calm objective stance on important and difficult matters in life, allowing for a somewhat dispassionate yet self-aware engagement. Perspective taking is not easily achieved, yet neither is it limited to just sages and saints. Wisdom can be developed through encountering tasks that involve the discernment of difficult life problems, cultivating an awareness of competing values and interests as well as moral development, and being exposed to traditional forms of wisdom found in places such as proverbs and classical philosophic and religious texts (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Levenson, 2009; Sternberg, 1998, 2004a).

The relationship of wisdom to traditional religious belief is important to consider. All major world religions claim wisdom as an essential characteristic of living life well, even as they

differ in the particulars of wisdom. Wisdom is portrayed as a divine gift bestowed by God for prophetic inspiration, and as a virtue that can be cultivated through the study of the Torah or the Koran, as well as through acts of faith, piety, and submission in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions. Wisdom is achieved through spiritual practices of meditation and detachment from transitory existence in Hinduism and Buddhism, or realized through aligning oneself with the natural flow and balance of nature as in the Taoist tradition, the discovery and cultivation of wisdom is paramount in the spiritual quest. Therefore, because religions are the traditional carriers of wisdom, it seems logical that present day psychological studies of wisdom, which exist in a cultural and historical context of their own, would also incorporate aspects of wisdom's sanctified past. This would require dialogue between disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, theology and religious studies.

Relatedly, philosophers have recognized deficiencies in psychological accounts of wisdom. By overemphasizing practical wisdom (phronesis) over transcendent or philosophical wisdom (sophia) psychologists have perhaps overlooked essential dimensions of wisdom (Trowbridge, 2011). Ignoring these deeper philosophical dimensions keeps wisdom in the domain of pragmatically oriented decision making when actually it may be even more important as a guiding virtue. Schwartz and Sharpe (2006) use Aristotle's notion of wisdom to uphold it as the chief virtue functioning as the "orchestrator" of other virtues and as the executive of moral functioning. This view is contrasted against the more narrow and reductionist forms of psychological accounts of wisdom that see it as one skill or strength among many. Accordingly, religious and philosophical views of wisdom could serve to complement those from psychological science.

Despite the potential benefit of considering philosophy and religion alongside positive psychology, the psychological research on wisdom has rarely included discussion or awareness of the philosophical or theological implications. Scientific models show the inherent quality of wisdom, emphasizing particular skills, traits, or characteristics of wisdom, yet they avoid the metaphysical context in which wisdom grew up. Even when wisdom's sacred past is acknowledged it is seen more as a product of cultural rather than religious influence (Czikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2005). While the current day psychology literature refers to the important influence that traditional religious beliefs have on lay and implicit conceptions of wisdom (Staudinger, 2008), and acknowledges that certain aspects of religious life such as a spiritual awareness, contemplative practices, and the possession of moral principles positively contribute to the construction of wisdom (Jordan, 2005; Levenson, 2009; Walsh, 2011, 2012), the underlying context and distinguishing quality of religious and spiritual beliefs are rarely analyzed and explicated for the full value and relevance they could bring to a modern psychological view of wisdom. The relationship between wisdom, religion, and spirituality is commonly and implicitly acknowledged in associating wisdom with paradigmatic religious figures such as Solomon, Jesus, Mother Teresa. and the Buddha. Beyond acknowledging these associations, little in the psychological literature explores the quality and function of wisdom in these individuals and how their religious and spiritual experiences help inform the study of wisdom.

Because psychological models of wisdom have not explored compelling questions with strong historical relevance such as why our most esteemed sages and wisdom figures in centuries past are almost all religiously committed individuals, and what effects of religious and spiritual

life might bring to the cultivation of wisdom, it seems that psychological models of wisdom could benefit from a stronger dialogue with religion and spirituality. The proposed project is an effort to consider wisdom from both vantage points – positive psychology and religion – and to test the possibility of building wisdom among young adults in a church congregation.

Psychological Perspectives and the Pragmatics of Living

Psychological models and studies have distinguished wisdom from intelligence (Sternberg, 1998, 2004a, 2004b) and certain personality traits (Staudinger, Dörner & Mickler, 2005), considered the role of emotion in wisdom (Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2005; Kunzmann & Baltes, 2003; Ruise, 2005), and uncovered a positive relationship between wisdom and life satisfaction (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). How various researchers define and measure wisdom shows both a degree of disparity and a common core. While some emphasize the cognitive dimension (Baltes & Smith, 2008; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000) others focus on the contextualized way wisdom is applied and the how wise individuals are able to balance their own goals and values with those of others and society at large (Sternberg, 1998). Yang (2008) emphasizes the “integration, embodiment and positive effects” (p. 62) of wisdom as it occurs in actuality, and Sternberg (1998, 2004a, 2004b) looks at how wise people can apply universal values for the common good. There are also definitions centered on personality characteristics of wisdom (Ardelt, 2004), balancing subjective and objective forms of understanding (Labouvie-Vief, 1990), recognizing the uncertainty and relative nature of knowledge (Meacham, 1990), and emphasizing cognitive and adaptive functions related to evolution (Csikszentmihalyi & Rathunde, 1990).

Despite the variety of emphases in psychological work on wisdom, a common core is also evident as the definitions reflect a unique confluence of various human strengths and a special ability to think, feel and act successfully upon difficult and important matters of life. This implies that wise people have the essential skills to perceive life in a particular way and succeed in the choices they make where most others do not. The Berlin wisdom paradigm (Baltes & Smith, 2008), which is one of the most widely cited and respected views in positive psychology, reveals the importance of the quality and type of knowledge about the essential elements of life. Wisdom is described by Baltes and Smith (2008) as “excellence in mind and virtue with a specific characterization of wisdom as an expert knowledge system dealing with the conduct and understanding of life. We call this domain of knowledge the fundamental pragmatics of life” (p. 58). They go on to describe the fundamental pragmatics as pertaining to life planning, life management and life review (p. 58). This definition provides a useful way to perceive wisdom and lends itself to a variety of interpretative perspectives. According to this model, assessing whether someone is wise depends on the quality of information the person has, the manner in which this information is used, and how it applies to the most basic and important matters of life in light of past, present and future considerations.

Developmentally, it appears that adolescence and young adulthood are particularly well suited for growing in cognitive dimensions of wisdom. “It seems that wisdom-related knowledge and judgment emerge between the ages of 14 and 25 years. Thereafter, wisdom-related performance levels off unless other facilitative factors are active” (Staudinger, 2008, p. 114). Though common belief may suggest that wisdom comes with older ages, positive psychology has suggested otherwise, at least with regard to the rate of wisdom acquisition: “Indeed, recent

work with adolescents has suggested that the primary period of development in wisdom-related knowledge before early adulthood may be the age from about 15 to 25 years” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 190).

What the Wisdom Traditions May Have to Offer

Wisdom as *sophia* in the Judeo-Christian tradition is a gift from God and provides a relational dimension leading to piety and right living. Psychological conceptualizations of wisdom may want to consider a more expansive vision of wisdom that includes these transcendent and sacred qualities. Furthermore, religious understandings of wisdom might also move positive psychology forward by providing ideas for how wisdom is developed and may add to the conceptual framework of happiness and wellbeing. For example, wisdom is commonly associated with happiness and living the good life, and there is growing empirical research to support this (Grossmann, Na, Varnum, Kitayama, & Nisbett, 2013; Le, 2011; Yang, 2013), but what is the good life? How might a life of prayer, self-sacrifice, non-attachment and belief in a transcendent God contribute to the development of wisdom in our own time, and how might it have contributed the level of wisdom in an individual such as Solomon? Is it even possible to study Solomon’s wisdom outside of his religious practices and beliefs, or are they so essential to his character that his wisdom is bound to them?

In religious traditions, learning to apply eternal wisdom—often imbedded in ancient sacred texts composed in a premodern world—to situations that are sensitive to the competing values of modern life requires developing spiritual awareness and insight capable of handling ambiguity. A host of disciplines exists to this end. For instance, Friends (Quakers) have a spiritual practice of listening to the Inner Light, which through quiet contemplation is meant to

lead one to follow Jesus. This seems a useful and meaningful practice when traversing difficult problems. The early Quakers used this practice to overcome despair during their persecution by Cromwell and the English monarchy. The experience of the Light within was always meant to be shared with others: “Over their history, Friends have described the dynamics of the spiritual life in a variety of way. Consistent, however, has been a pattern of interior struggle, resolution, then reaching outward to change the world” (Birkel, 2004, p. 22).

This contemplative practice has influenced the Quaker emphasis on egalitarianism as well, allowing each member or “friend” the opportunity to share the Inner Light with the community. Relating this to the criteria of value relativism in which wisdom develops (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000), it seems the practice of cultivating the Inner Light gives space for wisdom to manifest while remaining open to the presence and voices of others. This process allows for a Christian understanding of wisdom to be actualized in the present moment and applied to relevant problems of the day.

A similar spirituality based on discernment and practicality, whereby the light of Jesus illuminates an active life of contemplation in the world, is found in the mystical tradition of St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits. In this instance, wisdom is an active ingredient which creates stability in the chaos of life and functions to balance the various goods of creation: “Wisdom is also the gift that helps discernment, aids people to set order into life by choosing the right goals and the proper means to attain those goals” (Lonsdale, 2007, p. 86). If wisdom includes the ability to find one’s way through a multitude of complex values, then having a way to perceive what values may be more important than others seems sensible. A hierarchical ordering of values

does not lead one to dogmatically apply absolute principles uncritically, but rather provides a compass to navigate the path of wisdom.

As illustrated in these examples from Quakers and Jesuits, the virtue of faith brings a sense of trust in the presence of crippling doubt and the virtue of humility gives permission for one to admit limitations. Faith along with humility may be exactly what is needed not just for wisdom to develop but also to overcome the inevitable heartbreak and disillusionment of life. The virtues of faith and humility provide access to ancient traditions of wisdom, with examples to draw inspiration from and emulate.

One thinks of the biblical figure of Job as an example of wisdom working through unfathomable misery and uncertainty, yet in persevering coming to an even greater understanding of wisdom than was previously possible: “Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me. I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:4-6 Revised Standard Version). These final words of Job unveil a form of wisdom that stems not so much from living in accordance with righteous principles as in faithful surrender to the darkness of uncertainty that brings about a deeper experience of God’s presence and majesty. Job’s wisdom comes to embrace human suffering in the broader context of all creation and unites faith, humility and wisdom:

There, in the midst of measureless natural grandeur, the ambiguity of human life can be confronted with the honesty and humility that it requires.... Creation itself has expanded Job’s vision and called him to a deepening of faith that goes beyond understanding.

(Bergant, 2000, p. 107)

Finally, Job's unyielding patience and resiliency serve as an example of the emotional strengths commonly associated with wisdom.

Sternberg (2004b), in the article titled "Why smart people can be so foolish," addressed how certain errors in judgment can lead seemingly smart individuals to make unintelligent mistakes. The cognitive fallacies of unrealistic optimism, egocentrism, omniscience, omnipotence and invulnerability are described by Sternberg as flaws that keep smart people from growing in wisdom. From a religious perspective these fallacies all possess an inflated sense of selfish pride, the counter vice to the virtues of faith and humility. It stands to reason that "smart people," who have a strong ability to think logically, could still benefit from the traditional religious ideas centered around God as singularly all knowing and human intelligence as participating in this knowledge in a limited and finite manner. When God is removed from the equation, knowledge derives not as a gift and reflection of eternal wisdom but from the confines of one's own natural abilities. This serves to further the selfish game of competitive forms of knowledge and encourages the fallacies of foolishness.

If Sternberg's assertion is correct that "in wisdom, one certainly may seek good ends for oneself, but one also will seek good outcomes for others" (2004b, p. 147), then religious ideals of self-sacrifice, charity and universal moral principles may be of some assistance. Intelligence is not enough. It needs religious and spiritual values to open broader categories of knowledge that can lead to wisdom. Faith in a power beyond one's own, humility to ground knowledge in reality, and self-sacrificial love which places others before oneself are just some of the virtues that can keep smart people from becoming foolish and light the path of wisdom.

Conventional versus Critical Wisdom

Looking at wisdom more specifically through the Judeo-Christian lens reveals an important distinction between two unique wisdom traditions in the Bible (Morse, 1996). The first of these is conventional wisdom, best exemplified through the figure of King Solomon and meant to instill good character in order to live the good life. Conventional wisdom is similar to common sense and pertains to a cause and effect form of righteous living. If one does well and has a “fear of the Lord” then his or her life will prosper: “the wage of the righteous lead to life, the gain of the wicked to sin” (Prov. 10:16; Clements, 2000). This cause-and-effect paradigm for wisdom is challenged by other wisdom books such as Job and Ecclesiastes as they describe instances where simple wisdom breaks down before the mystery of suffering and the inevitable meaninglessness of life. Nonetheless, conventional wisdom is based on knowledge of God and the created order, seeking to uphold social life by rooting proper human action to obedience in following God’s plan for the good life.

Addressing difficult life problems and moral dilemmas in this tradition involves an appeal to living in conformity with divine law. While acknowledging the merits of the conventional wisdom tradition, in terms of a modern psychology of wisdom it has limitations. Although part of its strength is its sobering simplicity, it allows for less critical self-reflection, it does not fully confront the irony and ambiguity of life, and can serve to limit the scope on how wisdom is developed.

The focus of this current study was on critical wisdom, which sought to teach discernment, insight, and postformal thinking. Critical wisdom is found in the books of Ecclesiastes and Job, and in the teachings of Jesus. This more informal tradition finds wisdom in the incomprehensibility and mysterious presence of God in the world and even outside of

religious law, custom and ceremonial worship. It rejects the notion that prosperity and happiness naturally and necessarily follow a virtuous life. Although the teachings of Jesus will be the focal point in this study, this tradition also finds a clear voice in Qoheleth, “the teacher,” in the book of Ecclesiastes.

The book of Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth in Hebrew) speaks to the dissatisfaction and unhappiness that can occur even after one has followed the path of righteousness and sought wisdom. Regardless of our striving for wisdom, the reality of pain, suffering, and death are inevitable to both the wise and wicked (Murphy, 2002). This raises the question, why seek wisdom if it also is vanity and chasing after the wind (Ecclesiastes 1:14; 1:17)? The answer comes forth as Qoheleth challenges the proverbial wisdom of Israel, with a broader conception of God as mysterious and uncontrollable, and the ability to hold the tension and accept the silence of God in such matters. Yet in spite of this conflictual state, Qoheleth clearly remains devoted to seeking wisdom.

Yes, he [Qoheleth] freely admits that he never attained the wisdom he sought (7:23-24), and he clearly rejects many of the claims of the sages (8:17). But the points he scores (vanity, failure of justice to be rewarded, etc.) are precisely the stuff of wisdom, the preoccupation of the sages. (Murphy, 2002, p. 55)

Critical wisdom admits to the complexity and ambiguity of real life and it is for these reasons that it will be an essential component of the wisdom intervention used in this study.

Jesus’ critical wisdom is in line with the tradition of Ecclesiastes yet goes beyond any example in the Old Testament. He uses parables and aphorisms from everyday life to unsettle and expand people’s perception of religious life, placing God’s love and mercy at the center.

Jewish law and tradition are upheld as authoritative and valuable but are reinterpreted in light of their deeper spiritual meaning; here Jesus echoes the prophets as well as the wisdom figures. In addition, the critical wisdom of Jesus possesses certain psychological attributes that may be seen as ways to cultivate perspective in a uniquely Christian mode. The essential features of Jesus' critical wisdom are "guidance for contradictions, paradigm of conflict, individual voice, and paradoxical view of reality" (Morse, 1996, p. 253). These aspects, with the inclusion of prayer and the discernment of community values, were the essence of the wisdom intervention.

Jesus' special relationship with God gives his wisdom perspective, a certain authority, and divine endorsement that no other wisdom figure can claim. If Jesus' form of radical sacrificial love forever changed the way that humanity can relate to God, in like manner his wisdom altered the relationship of individuals toward on another. Similar to his unveiling of a new form of sacrificial love expressed through his passion and consequent death on the cross, Jesus also reveals a new way of seeing divine wisdom. Through Jesus' self-emptying God's love takes on new meaning. Relatedly, Jesus' wisdom is meant to usher in the kingdom of God and so ruptures the social order. It is important to remember that Christian theology views Jesus as the fulfillment of many Old Testament prototypes, Adam, Moses, David, as well as Solomon. With this in mind, it can be understood how the conventional view of wisdom in the book of Proverbs can be reexamined with a Christological key so that both the traditions of wisdom can exist as complementary. Still, for the purposes of our study the critical wisdom tradition took precedence.

Science and Faith in Dialog

As scientific methods advance they come into greater contact with the ultimate questions of human existence. This encounter often creates unnecessary conflict between science and

religion. The Templeton Foundation has a long history of facilitating this conversation and bringing fruitful dialog. As applied to wisdom, this complementary relationship allows for science to bring methods of inquiry and assessment while religious perspectives can enhance how and why wisdom develops. Positive psychology can recognize the value of wisdom without having to profess any philosophical or theological implications, yet broadening the conceptual framework and incorporating religious dimensions will expand psychological perspectives of wisdom toward deeper understanding.

The result of science and faith in fruitful dialog is more than the accumulation of factual knowledge, but should lead to the development of new way of seeing the world and humanity. It is this recognition of the “big questions” where wisdom can be of service. Wisdom allows us to see the parts in light of the whole, and never has this need been greater than now. Science has given us an immense power, and this power is only going to advance in potential for good or evil. The generations ahead will decide the course of action with a technological capacity of monstrous potential. Therefore, as the Templeton Foundation invests in research that gives hope to future generations, and as I look to integrate religious ideas of wisdom with those findings from psychological studies, it is my hope that this collaboration produced significant growth in wisdom among young adolescents, a time when wisdom can bring benefits for years to come.

As a science of wisdom needs the perspective that faith offers, so also wisdom communities can benefit from science. A faith community that wants to remain in dialogue with the culture at-large must take seriously the results of scientific research. Science explores wisdom on the natural level. As such, science can facilitate measuring and predicting some of the behaviors, values, and attitudes associated with wisdom. Today’s faith communities have the

opportunity to be mindful and attentive to what the empirical data is revealing. Ignoring facts as found through a study of the natural world can lead to a dangerous antirational and antiscientific posture which makes one choose between faith or reason, rather than seeing these as complementary. When science begins to explore topics that have typically been the property of religion, such as wisdom, there is an opportunity for faith communities to engage in meaningful dialog with science, thereby enriching the conversation and bringing the constructs involved to fuller expression.

In this project one particular Friends church was engaged through a collaborative process to teach a version of wisdom, informed both by scientific research and theological insight. Inviting psychology into the church, and the church into psychology, can help bring the light of faith into contact with the light of science. The truths derived from faith can be given a chance to be tested and their effectiveness documented. My particular research question was whether a positive psychology of wisdom can be taught to young adults through a church based mentoring intervention. I hypothesized that wisdom can be taught and the level of wisdom will increase as a result of a wisdom intervention.

Chapter 2

Methods

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of approximately 59 young adults, with 27 participating in wisdom cohorts at Newberg Friends Church (NFC) and 32 serving as a comparison group. I recruited a group of introductory psychology students at George Fox University to serve in the comparison group. The comparison group did not receive any instruction in wisdom and did not participate in other aspects of the study other than the completion of the pre- and post-tests. Of the comparison group 17 people completed both the pre- and post-tests, and with the experimental group 24 people completed both pre- and post-tests. Most participants ranged in age from 18 to 25, though one 38 year-old was allowed to participate in the wisdom cohort. The average age of participants was 19.14 for the comparison group (standard deviation of 2.32) and 21.89 for the wisdom group (standard deviation of 3.77). There were 16 females in the experimental group and 22 in the comparison group, with 11 males in the experimental group and 7 in the control group. A majority of the participants were European-American: 22 in the experimental group and 17 in the comparison group. There were 2 Asian or Asian American in the comparison group, 4 Hispanic Latino in the comparison group, and 1 African American in the experimental group. Six reported “other” ethnicity in the comparison group and 4 in the experimental group. The education of the comparison group participants ranged from high school to graduate student and were reported as follows: 9 High

school, 19 Some college, 1 College degree, and 0 Graduate student. In the experimental group reported education was: 2 High school, 16 Some College, 4 College degree, and 5, Graduate student. The comparison group's religious demographics consisted of 7 Mainline Protestant, 8 Non-denominational, 6 Evangelical, 5 Roman Catholic, and 1 Agnostic. Among those in the experimental group, 4 reported being Mainline Protestant, 9 Non-denominational, 9 Evangelical, 2 Roman Catholic, 2 Other Religion, and no agnostics.

Procedure

Beginning in the Fall of 2014 I began obtaining participants through promotion of a new wisdom ministry program. After I recruited the pool of participants I assessed background information such as age, education, and occupation. All participants were given pre-test assessment measures. The comparison group completed the same online questionnaires as those in the experimental group. The online questionnaire packets were given twice – once prior to the wisdom intervention and once at the conclusion of the intervention. Each assessment administration required approximately 30 minutes of time. Participants were given a \$50 gift card as compensation after completing the questionnaire packet the second time.

Intervention

The intervention was comprised of 28 people placed in 5 wisdom cohorts with 5-6 people per group. Twenty-four individuals completed the intervention and the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires. Each cohort was led and mentored by an individual or couple nominated and chosen by church leaders. The mentors were individuals perceived as embodying Christian wisdom, and they were all volunteers from the same Quaker congregation. Some of the mentors worked at George Fox University and at least two of the leaders knew some of the participants.

The cohorts met six times over the course of four months from January, 2015 to April, 2015.

Each meeting was approximately two hours. Between meetings participants were given assignments to help promote wisdom through spiritual practices, such as meditating on biblical passages and problem solving worksheets. These worksheets involved difficult and crucial matters of life relevant to young adults, such as relational, family and career choices.

The meetings were held in the homes of the mentors and consisted of a dialogical problem-solving format, which allowed for the wisdom literature and gospel readings from that day's protocol to inform difficult matters about the uncertainty of human knowledge and its frailty amidst suffering. This format was used to create a process in which wisdom could grow with direct real-life application. The intervention was created with the intention of learning how to apply Christian wisdom in different circumstances, sensitive to the contextualized nature of wisdom. Due to the emphasis in the Christian tradition on justice and mercy, these groups were intended to provide a safe context to consider morality and values and in a complex world.

Cohort leaders kept a process journal, which they updated after each meeting, the journal consisted of:

1. The names of absent group members
2. An overall assessment of the group members' interactions
3. What they would change in that session if given the chance
4. Personal reflections on leading the group

This journal allowed us to closely monitor the subtleties of each cohort and the particular level of change among them throughout the process.

The nature of the wisdom intervention was determined in collaboration with leaders at Newberg Friends Church. Given the importance of both science and faith in this project, it was important that every stage of the process involve full partnership with church leaders—a process that McMinn, Aikins, and Lish (2003) refer to as “advanced collaboration.” Essential aspects of the rationale for this intervention involved experiencing God through a variety of spiritual practices, considering one’s own experience in the context of trusting relationships with others who share common core values, understanding, adapting, and appropriating the beliefs, cognitions, values, and practices that have become a vital part of a particular Christian community.

The 8-lesson protocols were developed collaboratively in advance and consisted of first, a brief introduction and community building discussion of the topic for that session. Second, a devotional thought from the critical wisdom literature, the Gospels, or another spiritual writer in the Christian tradition. Third, a selected problem either hypothetical or real-life was presented (e.g., deciding between two career paths, one based on practicality and the other based on passion and desire, a problem that creates tension in balancing personal desires alongside those of family and society). Next, while encouraging the participants to attend to their thoughts and emotional responses, a pondering of the text and time in silent waiting followed. The groups returned to the contemporary problem and shared any insight that may have arisen during the time of silence. Then the groups went through a discernment process alongside personal and community values that related to the problem. Participants were encouraged to think through the problem from a critical wisdom perspective, exploring how Jesus might approach this issue, while also attending to their own internal reactions and feelings. Group leaders were encouraged

to highlight the context of the problem at hand and discourage quick, dogmatic, or simplistic responses. Resolutions were then considered as wisdom leaders and members discussed solutions in the group context. After this, group leaders asked participants to consider how similar discernment processes may pertain to other issues they are facing in their personal lives. Finally, homework was assigned with practical life worksheets and spiritual practices for the coming month. The homework assignments served two ends: to help participants learn to embody wisdom they see in others, including those in the Bible, and to develop a post-formal thinking style with the detached empathy and psychological distance that cultivate perspective.

Measures

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Pavot, Diener, Colvin, & Sandvik, 1991) is one of the most commonly used measures of subjective happiness in psychology. Its five items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The SWLS has a 2-month test–retest correlation coefficient of .82 and an internal consistency of $\alpha = .87$ (Diener et. al., 1985).

The Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES) is a self-report measure made up of 16 questions and is intended to assess various domains of spirituality and religiousness. Internal consistency reliability with Cronbach’s alpha is .94 and .95 (Underwood & Teresi, 2002).

Positive psychology and faith. A scale was used to assess participants view towards positive psychology. This scale consists of six questions and is based on a 7-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

The Duke University Religion Index (DUREL) is a 5-item self-report measure used to assess religiosity. The first two items are based on a 6-point rating scale and are intended to

assess participation in religious activity both private and communal. The scale goes from 1 (*never/rarely or never*) to 6 (*more than once/week or once/day*). The last three items assess religious belief and experience using a 5-point rating scale from 1 (*definitely not true*) to 5 (*definitely true of me*). Internal consistency reliability measured with Cronbach's alpha's = 0.78–0.91 (Koenig & Büssing, 2010).

The Wise Thinking and Acting Questionnaire (WITHAQ) is a 13-item self-report questionnaire using a 4-point rating scale. Bangen, Meeks, and Jeste (2013) reported an internal consistency of 0.74. The WITHAQ primarily assesses the cognitive dimensions of wisdom.

The Complex Postformal Thought Questionnaire (PFT) (reliability $\alpha = 0.63$) was developed by Jan Sinnott and consists of a 10-item questionnaire, with items scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not true* to 7 = *very true*). It is designed to measure complex cognitive ability and various aspects of a postformal thinking style (Cartwright, Galupo, Tyree, & Jennings, 2009).

The Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS) is a self-report measure of quality of life in relation to perceptions of religious and existential well-being. The internal consistency reliability is above .84 (Bufford, Paloutzian, & Ellison, 1991). It consists of 20 items with a 6-point rating scale.

The Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) is a 120-item measure of the 24 strengths that can be used to investigate how wisdom and other character strengths change over time (Linley et al., 2007). It shows good reliability with Cronbach's alpha for all scales at $\alpha > .70$, and test–retest correlations at 0.70 (Linley et al., 2007). Though this is normally a

commercially-available test that entails an administration fee, the current administrators of the VIA-IS granted permission to use the measure without charge for this dissertation study.

Demographic Questionnaire. As part of the online survey a questionnaire was given to each participant to obtain information such as age, ethnicity/race, level of education, employment status, and religious affiliation.

Chapter 3

Results

Data Analysis

Data analysis was based on mixed model analyses of variance (ANOVAs), with the repeated measures factor being pre- and post-intervention scores on the various assessment measures and the between-groups factor being the experimental versus control condition. For each of the outcome variables, I expected the intervention group to change over time differently than the comparison group, such that significant interaction effects would be observed. The overall scores for each group on the variables of interest are reported in Table 1. Because of the large number of hypothesis tests, a conservative alpha of .01 was used to control for Type I error. For most scales average item scores were used rather than summing scores in order to control for missing data.

Process journals were collected from the leaders of the wisdom cohorts. They reflected overwhelmingly positive remarks about the groups, including the development of the groups' cohesion and openness to one another, the depth of conversation, and the level of process. The journals also revealed the personally meaningful and challenging experiences of the group leaders. Some described a genuine attachment to the group and expressed sadness at ending. The 9 ratings of the participants by the group leaders showed, even while rating some participants as decreasing in wisdom, a significantly larger increase in wisdom among the participants. Twenty-six ratings showed an increase in wisdom, 3 ratings of decreasing in wisdom were found, with 17 ratings of no change.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-test Scores for Comparison and Wisdom Groups

Scale	Comparison Pre		Wisdom Pre		Comparison Post		Wisdom Post		Effects	Pre-Post ES	Post ES
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev			
WITHAQ_PW	3.10	0.45	2.92	0.56	3.03	0.35	3.18	0.53	Interaction, $F(1,39) = 7.83, p = .008$	$d = 0.71$	$d = 0.33$
WITHAQ_DT	3.10	0.60	3.33	0.36	3.05	0.54	3.34	0.50		$d = 0.03$	$d = 0.56$
WITHAQ_AU	2.32	0.74	2.33	0.71	2.38	0.71	2.38	0.63		$d = 0.07$	$d = 0.00$
VIA_PERSPECTIVE	4.00	0.74	3.92	0.66	4.09	0.57	4.02	0.53		$d = 0.23$	$d = 0.13$
VIA_LOVE	4.07	0.51	3.91	0.54	4.13	0.70	3.95	0.56		$d = 0.12$	$d = 0.28$
VIA_LOVE OF LEARNING	3.51	0.66	3.78	0.87	3.69	0.73	3.90	0.83		$d = 0.22$	$d = 0.27$
VIA_TEAMWORK	3.47	0.40	3.69	0.45	3.60	0.41	3.88	0.38		$d = 0.47$	$d = 0.71$
VIA_JUDGMENT	4.38	0.43	4.24	0.65	4.47	0.33	4.28	0.64		$d = 0.09$	$d = 0.37$
VIA_SOC INTELLIGENCE	3.78	0.60	3.74	0.54	3.91	0.69	3.92	0.60		$d = 0.38$	$d = 0.02$
VIA_SPIRITUALITY	4.04	0.73	4.35	0.52	3.96	0.62	4.41	0.48		$d = 0.17$	$d = 0.81$
VIA_ZEST	3.60	0.48	3.48	0.49	3.67	0.78	3.81	0.51		$d = 0.87$	$d = 0.21$
VIA_KINDNESS	4.07	0.72	4.23	0.40	4.33	0.47	4.41	0.44		$d = 0.47$	$d = 0.18$
VIA_LEADERSHIP	3.84	0.59	3.85	0.45	3.98	0.54	3.83	0.50		$d = 0.06$	$d = 0.29$
VIA_SELF REGULATION	3.56	0.51	3.10	0.68	3.49	0.60	3.15	0.76		$d = 0.15$	$d = 0.50$
VIA_CREATIVITY	3.53	0.59	3.36	1.03	3.82	0.53	3.70	0.91	Within-Subjects, $F(1,29) = 8.50, p = .007$	$d = 0.61$	$d = 0.16$
VIA_CURIOSITY	4.04	0.46	3.91	0.59	4.02	0.62	4.10	0.52		$d = 0.36$	$d = 0.14$

Scale	Comparison Pre		Wisdom Pre		Comparison Post		Wisdom Post		Effects	Pre-Post ES	Post ES
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev			
VIA_FAIRNESS	3.93	0.55	4.06	0.46	4.22	0.43	4.02	0.57		$d = 0.10$	$d = 0.40$
VIA_FORGIVENESS	3.62	0.63	3.78	0.75	3.67	0.66	3.95	0.70		$d = 0.41$	$d = 0.41$
VIA_HONESTY	4.42	0.38	4.25	0.39	4.44	0.34	4.18	0.50		$d = 0.11$	$d = 0.61$
VIA_HOPE	3.96	0.42	3.68	0.57	4.33	0.39	3.85	0.49		$d = 0.33$	$d = 1.08$
VIA_HUMOR	3.93	0.57	3.76	0.73	4.09	0.62	3.91	0.79		$d = 0.37$	$d = 0.25$
VIA_PERSEVERANCE	4.16	0.41	3.65	0.55	4.29	0.43	3.75	0.53	Between-Subjects, $F(1,29) = 8.16, p = .008$	$d = 0.23$	$d = 1.12$
VIA_GRATITUDE	4.02	0.50	4.10	0.59	4.29	0.49	4.09	0.49		$d = 0.03$	$d = 0.41$
DSES	3.13	1.00	2.63	0.63	3.20	0.75	2.38	0.58	Between-Subjects, $F(1,40) = 9.56, p = .004$	$d = 0.61$	$d = 1.22$
PFT_UC	5.06	0.99	5.14	1.18	4.51	0.83	5.51	1.12	Interaction, $F(1,39) = 12.94, p = .001$	$d = 0.41$	$d = 1.01$
PFT_SC	5.14	1.09	4.74	1.06	4.43	1.20	4.97	1.20	Interaction, $F(1,39) = 7.33, p = .010$	$d = 0.20$	$d = 0.45$
PFT_ME	5.05	1.19	5.40	0.91	5.04	0.73	5.58	0.97		$d = 0.19$	$d = 0.63$
PFT_Avg	5.09	1.01	5.13	0.90	4.70	0.80	5.37	0.94	Interaction, $F(1,39) = 10.25, p = .003$	$d = 0.36$	$d = 0.77$
SWL	5.34	0.87	5.25	1.09	5.23	0.99	5.69	1.07	Interaction, $F(1,40) = 7.61, p = .009$	$d = 0.70$	$d = 0.45$

Scale	Comparison Pre		Wisdom Pre		Comparison Post		Wisdom Post		Effects	Pre-Post ES	Post ES
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev			
PPF	4.57	1.25	5.17	1.12	4.92	1.25	5.90	0.82	Within-Subjects, $F(1,40) = 7.86, p = .008$; Between- subjects, $F(1,40) = 7.63, p = .009$	$d = 0.82$	$d = 0.93$
DUREL	21.00	3.20	24.08	2.95	21.22	2.53	23.75	3.34	Between-Subjects, $F(1,40) = 10.52, p = .002$	$d = 0.12$	$d = 0.85$
SWB_RWB	4.58	0.84	5.13	0.70	4.38	0.81	5.24	0.65	Between-Subjects, $F(1,40) = 11.42, p = .002$	$d = 0.26$	$d = 1.17$
SWB_EWB	4.39	0.74	4.52	0.80	4.48	0.65	4.81	0.62		$d = 0.77$	$d = 0.52$

Notes. WITHAQ = Wise Thinking and Acting Questionnaire. WITHAQ_PW = Wise Thinking and Acting Questionnaire (Practical Wisdom). WITHAQ_DT = Wise Thinking and Acting Questionnaire (Dialectical Thinking). WITHAQ_AU = Wise Thinking and Acting Questionnaire (Awareness of Uncertainty). VIA = Values in Action. DSES = Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale. PFT_UC = PostFormal Thinking (Underlying Complexity). PFT_SC = PostFormal Thinking (Subjective Choice). PFT_ME = PostFormal Thinking (Multiple Elements). PFT_Avg = PostFormal Thinking (Average). SWL = Satisfaction With Life. PPF = Positive Psychology and Faith. DUREL = Duke Religion Index. SWB_RWB = Spiritual Well-Being (Religious Well-Being). SWB_EWB = Spiritual Well-Being (Existential Well-Being). Pre-post ES = Effect size of changes in the experimental group. Post ES = Effect size of the difference between groups at post-test. d = Cohen's d .

Interaction Effects. Significant interaction effects were observed for the Practical Wisdom subscale on the Wise Thinking and Acting Questionnaire, postformal thinking on the Complex PostFormal Thought Questionnaire, and life satisfaction on the Satisfaction With Life Scale. All the above interaction effects show changes in the expected direction within the experimental group.

Between-Groups Effects. Significant group differences were found on the VIA subscale that measures perseverance, with higher scores for the control group. Other significant between subjects effects were found on the overall Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale, which revealed lower scores for the experimental group (this scale is inverted, with lower scores signifying increased levels of reported spiritual experiences). The Positive Psychology and Faith Scale revealed similar results, with the experimental group showing higher scores than the comparison group. In addition, religiosity measured on the Duke University Religion Index revealed greater religious commitment for the experimental group than the comparison group, and religious well-being on the spiritual well-being scale showed a similar pattern.

Within-Subjects Effects. Significant within-subjects effects were found on the Positive Psychology and Faith Scale and for Creativity on the VIA Scale. Both of these scales revealed an increase among the experimental and the comparison group.

Chapter 4

Discussion

This study explicated the relationship between a positive psychology of wisdom and wisdom understood in a Christian community. While this study only looked at one church community, there are many variables that remain relevant and will overlap with other religious bodies, such as the inclusion of divine influence, past traditions, and communal views of morality. A unique strength of this study is rather than just using a religious population to study, space was given to the pastor and leaders within the congregation to have an influence upon the design and implementation of the intervention, thereby making it a study of religious and spiritual diversity and clergy-psychology collaboration from the inside out.

Relative to the comparison group, the experimental group increased in subjective well-being, postformal thinking, and practical wisdom. The increased scores for the experimental group make it likely that the wisdom intervention impacted the participants in various ways, though cause-and-effect is impossible to fully determine in a quasi-experimental design such as this. Significant increases in postformal thinking and practical wisdom are particularly important given their direct relation to conceptual definitions of wisdom. The increase in postformal thinking reflects growth in a crucial aspect of the critical wisdom tradition, which again is “guidance for contradictions, paradigm of conflict, individual voice, and paradoxical view of reality” (Morse, 1996, p. 253). Practical wisdom is more in line with the definition of perspective that Seligman and Peterson provide. It highlights knowledge of values and cognitive aspects of

wisdom, while also showing an ability to use heuristics gained through experience (Moraitou & Efklides, 2012). Growth in this dimension of wisdom may reflect the importance of conventional wisdom and the benefit of relational encounters with others who embody the wisdom of a specific religious tradition.

Clinical implications could follow from the increase in life satisfaction among the experimental group. While many confounding variables could influence this, it may reveal the need for greater clinical awareness of wisdom development. Both practical wisdom and postformal thinking possess elements of optimal mental health, such as the capacity for reflection, value awareness, and the ability to approach problems from multiple angles and with cognitive flexibility. While most clinicians would not list wisdom as a potential treatment goal, the application of wisdom research in therapy settings could prove to be a fruitful endeavor. This study reveals the relatively short time in which measurements of practical wisdom, postformal thinking, and life satisfaction were able to increase, thereby showing that it may not take a lifetime to develop wisdom, but context, leadership, and collaboration between science, religion, and spirituality may have something to contribute.

Future research could focus on the interaction between wisdom interventions and the developmental aspects of adolescent psychology, as well as the different cultural and religious contributions to facilitating wisdom. Though a strength of this study was its ecological validity, and the strong relationship between the scientific and faith communities, which occurred from beginning to end of the project, the lack of random assignment rendered it a quasi-experimental study. Future research with true experimental designs will be an important next step in this line of research.

Regarding pastoral implications, there is a continued need to consider the role psychological research has as a way to promote ministry. When dealing with a complex topic such as wisdom, psychology can help religious traditions clarify their own sphere of influence and monitor the changes that are occurring in various areas. In this study we saw that religious experiences and religiosity did not increase, but growth in understanding and addressing complex problems did. This can help pastors better allocate resources and have a better understanding of the ways timeless virtues such as wisdom may be expressing themselves with the younger generation. Breaking down wisdom and analyzing its various domains can increase precision and help pastors read church members recognize the relationship between psychological and spiritual growth.

Limitations of this study included the relatively low number of participants. Relatedly, it was a quasi-experimental design because random assignment to comparison and experimental groups was not feasible given the low number of volunteers. Participant selection may be the greatest confounding variable, as those in the experimental group may have been more motivated to pursue and therefore more likely to grow in wisdom. Other confounding variables were the quality of wisdom mentorship provided by the leaders of the experimental groups that made it difficult to assess whether or not the wisdom curriculum was the most salient independent variable. The relationships that developed between the group leaders and experimental group participants may have been a catalyst for positive growth in certain domains of wisdom even apart from the specific curriculum that was used.

Conclusion

Positive psychology brought wisdom from its hallowed past and made it a viable and relevant topic of scientific investigation. This study sought to bring the best of this research back into wisdom's natural setting; to open the door to the voice of wisdom from the past while holding onto all that empirical science has to offer. The hope of this study was one of mutual enrichment to both religious and scientific communities, and thus avoiding reductionist and irrational tendencies. As topical studies of the virtues continue to grow, the context of such research may show greater validity and cultural sensitivity when religious and spiritual communities are considered, consulted, and actively engaged.

As mentioned above, this project was highly collaborative, and it provides an example of mutual benefit to both the church and the scientific community. It shows that including the perspective, input, and influence of a church community, even during the initial stages of scientific investigation, can lead to positive results. The collaborative nature of this project may be its defining characteristic and most salient strength.

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Appendix A**Wisdom Curriculum (Mentoring Guide)**

Forming Wisdom in Christian Community Mentoring Guide

Thank you for leading a wisdom cohort. We want this to be a positive, growing experience for you as well as for the women and men in your mentoring cohort.

This plan gives you some direction for what to cover in each meeting. While we want you to experience freedom and flexibility to follow God's prompting, we also ask you that you do your best to follow the plan outlined here.

You will find 8 sessions in this guide, but there are only 6 meetings. This gives you some flexibility in which lessons to choose. Everyone should choose Module 1, then after that you are free to select which remaining 5 work best for you and your group.

Mentoring Guide, Module I

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Please provide a brief description of what this ministry is about and what you hope to see as a result. Keep this to 5 minutes or less.

Distribute the Meeting 1 handout.

Review the ground rules on the handout.

Discussion

What is wisdom to you? Have people mention people in their own lives that embody wisdom. What are wise people like? Try to hear from everyone in the group.

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

John 9: 1-11

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?" "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes. He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!" But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!" They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?" He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"

We are people who want to make attributions, to explain things so that we understand them. But sometimes our explanations don't do justice to complex situations. Jesus recognized this complexity.

In our rush to explain things, we can easily come to sloppy conclusions about how to understand pain, suffering, and sin in our world. That's what happened to Jesus's disciples. Sometimes we

might be prone to blame God for suffering, but that's not any more helpful than blaming one's sin or one's parents. Suffering is complicated. Can we learn to sit still and trust God amidst life's suffering?

The 14th Century mystic, Julian of Norwich, lived in a time of incredible suffering. She saw the devastation of the Bubonic plague that wiped out a huge portion of the population in Europe. As she herself was gravely ill she experienced a revelation from God, which she published as "Revelations of Divine Love." In her revelations, Julian observes:

And for the tender love that our good Lord hath to all that she be saved, He comforteth readily and sweetly, signifying this: It is [tragic] that sin is cause of all this pain; but all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well. These words were said full tenderly, showing no manner of blame to me nor to any that shall be saved. Then were it a great unkindness to blame or wonder on God for my sin, since He blameth not me for sin.

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

Your friend has been diagnosed with a serious form of cancer that will require difficult treatment with an unknown outcome. You want to remain hopeful and encouraging to your friend, but inwardly you are worried and sad. Your friend mentions that the cancer has been difficult for her faith. She wonders how a loving and powerful God could allow such a thing. You've been pondering this, too, and aren't sure how to respond to your friend's questions about faith.

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem. Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking. Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. Just as Jesus recognized complexity with the man born blind, there is complexity here. How are you feeling the complexity?
3. Do you find yourself wanting to move toward quick answers, as Jesus's disciples did?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

We often hear that the shortest verse of the Bible is "Jesus wept." But what is the context for this verse?

John 11:30–37

Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him, and he was deeply troubled. "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see."

Then Jesus wept.

The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!"

But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about how Jesus experienced suffering. Allow complexity and various emotions. For example, the John 11 passage depicts great sadness and anger about the brokenness of the world. God suffers along with us.

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

These groups are designed to help us "pursue wisdom." A basic step toward making wise choices is to first examine how we naturally make choices. Thinking about our discussion today, what activity seemed to most help you think clearly? Silence? The Bible? Thinking about a contemporary issue? Discussion and hearing other perspectives? [Discuss]

Which activity was most difficult for you personally to engage with? Silence, Bible, contemporary issue, discussion? [Discuss]

Whether you found an activity easy or difficult, were there any that seemed to cause you to move toward what you see as "wisdom" or more in line with the character of God? [Discuss]

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?

How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed prior to your next group meeting (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Mentoring Guide, Module 2

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Invite people to share homework and answer any questions that may have arisen since the first meeting. Inquire as to whether or not the participants recognized any of the themes touched on in the last meeting throughout the past few weeks.

Distribute the handout.

Discussion: A day in the life of a wise person

Ask the participants to imagine the daily activities a wise person might engage in. How might they spend their time, what would they read, what would they eat, would they spend most of their time alone or with others?

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

Luke 18:18-23

Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: "Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "Only God is truly good. But to answer your question, you know the commandments: 'You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.'"

The man replied, "I've obeyed all these commandments since I was young."

When Jesus heard his answer, he said, "There is still one thing you haven't done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very rich.

This passage points to the cost of following Jesus: the utter abandonment of self and material gain. Its radical message is found in how Jesus asks his followers to go beyond what the law asks in order to show the love of God in a new and unconditional way.

If we merely focus on obeying the law of God sometimes we can find ourselves simply aiming for the minimum or following a checklist. We may also keep aspects of ourselves hidden from God, because we are basing our relationship with God on obeying rules rather than God's unconditional love. In our desire to preserve our forms of worldly wealth, power and prestige we may deny aspects ourselves that even we aren't fully aware of due to unconscious guilt. What

does it look like to empty ourselves completely in service to others? Does wisdom lead us to serve those who go without the basic necessities in life?

It can be difficult to find the proper time to let go of our material possessions and relinquish the hold worldly passions can have on us. Wisdom requires discernment in recognizing when extreme measures may be necessary to bring about the kingdom of God. Seasons change and time may bring opportunities that we must seize, if we are cultivating the ways of wisdom. As the book of Ecclesiastes teaches, everything has its time:

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season,
a time for every activity under heaven.
A time to be born and a time to die.
A time to plant and a time to harvest.
A time to kill and a time to heal.
A time to tear down and a time to build up.
A time to cry and a time to laugh.
A time to grieve and a time to dance.
A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones.
A time to embrace and a time to turn away.
A time to search and a time to quit searching.
A time to keep and a time to throw away.
A time to tear and a time to mend.
A time to be quiet and a time to speak.
A time to love and a time to hate.
A time for war and a time for peace.

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

In the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in another country you want to travel there at your own expense to provide whatever help and support you are able to offer. This would mean stopping your college studies, at least temporarily, and significant personal costs for travel and lodging. Your parents have generously financed your college education and feel strongly that you should complete your degree before embarking on an overseas mission. They counsel you that you will be more effective when you have your degree and a more defined plan.

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem.

Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking.

Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. What might the relationship be between wisdom and storing up treasure in heaven? Does this at all feel like denying basic human needs?
3. Do you perceive tension in obeying the law of God and following Jesus in a more radical way?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

The writer of Ecclesiastes looks at the human tendency to praise wealth, power and might and to overlook virtues such as wisdom. Do you agree or disagree with this assessment? In what ways do you see wisdom overlooked? Where do you see power and wealth over glorified? What happens to people and communities when we undervalue immaterial things such as wisdom and overvalue wealth and power?

Ecclesiastes 9: 13-18

Here is another bit of wisdom that has impressed me as I have watched the way our world works. There was a small town with only a few people, and a great king came with his army and besieged it. A poor, wise man knew how to save the town, and so it was rescued. But afterward no one thought to thank him. So even though wisdom is better than strength, those who are wise will be despised if they are poor. What they say will not be appreciated for long. Better to hear the quiet words of a wise person than the shouts of a foolish king. Better to have wisdom than weapons of war, but one sinner can destroy much that is good.

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about how wisdom is distinguished from might, and how wisdom can be easily forgotten. Allow complexity and various emotions.

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

"Better to hear the quiet words of a wise person than the shouts of a foolish king," says the teacher in Ecclesiastes. What are some examples (either in wider society or for you personally) of loud shouts of foolishness? (Discuss)

What have you found helpful in quieting those loud voices? (Discuss)

What are some examples of “quiet words of a wise person”? Why are they not as loud, not as influential sometimes as foolishness? (Discuss)

What ideas or strategies can you share for tuning out the loud and unhelpful voices, and listening more carefully to the quiet, helpful ones? (Discuss)

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?

How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed prior to your next group meeting (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Mentoring Guide, Module 3

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Invite people to share homework and answer any questions that may have arisen since the last meeting. Inquire as to whether or not the participants recognized any of the themes touched on in the last meeting throughout the past few weeks.

Distribute the attached handout.

Discussion

You're meeting a friend in Portland, and are running late. It seems that every stoplight in Tigard is red, and you find yourself feeling tense and driving more impulsively than usual. In light of this situation, review Robert Sternberg's fallacies of foolishness (see handout).

Sternberg (2004b), in article titled "Why smart people can be so foolish," addressed how certain errors in judgment can lead seemingly smart individuals to make unintelligent mistakes. Invite participants to share thoughts and feelings about these fallacies and perhaps how Christian faith can work to correct them?

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

Mark 12:28-34

One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

The teacher of religious law replied, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law."

Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Jesus emphasizes a total commitment to loving God with every aspect of ourselves. He also links the love of God with love of neighbor. Perhaps these commandments are intertwined, two sides of the same coin or perhaps we struggle to find a balance between these commands as they pull us in different directions.

How might wisdom aid us in our love of God and our neighbors?

Why might Jesus have chosen these two commandments as the greatest?

Drawing out this connection of services and love to others in light of a deep love for God, Mother Teresa talks about the unfulfilled need and “poverty” that so many people face in our society. Loving our neighbor may involve sharing with them the love of God that we are called to carry within us.

“The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love. There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty - it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There's a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God.”

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

A friend shows up on your front porch asking for a place to stay for a few weeks until he or she finds a job and can afford a place to live. You know your friend has had problems with substance abuse and with keeping jobs in the past. In the past you've offered your place as a safe place for your friend to regroup when they've needed it. However you've recently gotten married and you and your spouse are struggling with the transition to marriage and with communicating well. Your spouse feels strongly that the two of you need the space and privacy of your home to be able to work through this difficult time in your marriage.

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem.

Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking.

Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. Do you perceive any pull towards one of the two great commandments of Jesus?

3. What is it about the scribe's response to Jesus that made it wise? How might the response apply to this particular problem?
4. How do we love our neighbor when it feel like the needs of one are pitted against the needs of another? Which neighbor do we choose? Do we have to choose? How do we love both when there are conflicting needs?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

Some of the stories in the Old Testament can at times be difficult to understand. Jephthah is one of these stories. This is the story of a man who makes a vow to God that causes him to sacrifice his daughter. There are some important things to keep in mind about this story when reading it. This happened during a time that Israel was spiraling away from God and God's commandments: there was little regard for the Mosaic Law (which did not allow for human sacrifices), and Israel was increasingly being influenced by its neighbors (some of these neighbors practiced human sacrifice). The sad story of Jephthah does not tell the story of his faithfulness. But rather it tells the story of a man who found himself in a culture that had travelled so far away from God's vision for God's people that he was unable to see how to faithfully love God.

Judges 11:30-40

And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands. He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus Israel subdued Ammon. When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of timbrels! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, "Oh! My daughter! You have brought me down and I am devastated. I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break." "My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised, now that the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. But grant me this one request," she said. "Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry." "You may go," he said. And he let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. After the two months, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. From this comes the Israelite tradition that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about. Allow complexity and various emotions.

Some questions to consider:

1. Does loving God ever require us to hurt our neighbor?
2. Do we live in a world where we hurt one another in the name of loving God?

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

In the situation with the friend needing a place to live and a new marriage that needs nurturing, there is potential for hurt with both choices. What are some of the potential hurts to each person? (Discuss)

In the same way, both the friend and the spouse could experience transformative love depending on how you respond. What are some of the loving actions that could be done to each party? What could be some of the outcomes? (Discuss)

Our culture sometimes tells us to take those lists of hurts and of loving actions, and weigh them on a scale to find the one with the most potential good. Has your reading of the Bible or experience in community given you any other ways of trying to decide what a wise choice is? (Discuss)

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?

How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed prior to your next group meeting (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Mentoring Guide, Module 4

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Invite people to share homework and answer any questions that may have arisen since the last meeting. Inquire as to whether or not the participants recognized any of the themes touched on in the last meeting throughout the past few weeks.

Distribute the attached handout.

Discussion

Do you have to be old to be wise? Encourage a discussion among participants.

Did you know that the psychological research on wisdom shows that wisdom increases most rapidly in late adolescence and early adulthood? It appears to be true that wisdom increases some with experience, and therefore age, but young people can be wise also.

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

Matthew 6:30-34

And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith? So don't worry about these things, saying, "What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?" These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Anxiety is a plague that can work against our sense of peace and trust in God. It is quite common in our busy society, which places so much value on gaining material possessions and worldly status. Jesus is calling us to put our priorities in the right order.

It may become easy to feel lonely and resentful when we do not get the objects of our desire. We often assume that God's blessing will follow us if we live in accordance with God's law. Jesus seems to promise us that we will obtain the things we need if we put our relationship with God first, but it may not always feel that way in day-to-day life. How might we come to live with a joyful awareness of God in spite of our worry that we will not have all our desires met?

Henri Nouwen wrote often about the struggle of loneliness and the pervasive anxiety around our personal and interpersonal needs. He describes how joy and sorrow should be seen as present in every moment rather than as opposites that exist completely on their own.

"Joy is not the same as happiness. We can be unhappy about many things, but joy can still be there because it comes from the knowledge of God's love for us. We are inclined to think that when we are sad we cannot be glad, but in the life of a God-centered person, sorrow and joy can exist together. That isn't easy to understand, but when we think about some of our deepest life experiences, such as being present at the birth of a child or the death of a friend, great sorrow and great joy are often seen to be parts of the same experience. Often we discover the joy in the midst of the sorrow."

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

You've been single for quite some time despite actively pursuing a romantic relationship. You've always believed God rewards those who are faithful and have lived in accordance with traditional Christian values. Lately you've noticed that your friends with different moral standards, who don't pray or participate in church life, are in happy and committed relationships.

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem.

Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking.

Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. How might this sense of unfulfilled desire affect a person's relationship with God and others?
3. Is relational intimacy necessary for the development of wisdom?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

Teresa of Avila

"Settle yourself in solitude and you will come upon Him in yourself."

Richard Foster also describes solitude in a way that points towards finding God, and in a way to help heal our sense of aloneness:

"Solitude is more a state of mind and heart than it is a place. There is a solitude of the heart that can be maintained at all times. Crowds, or the lack of them, have little to do with this inward

attentiveness. It is quite possible to be a desert hermit and never experience solitude. But if we possess inward solitude we do not fear being alone, for we know that we are not alone.”

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about how Jesus experienced suffering. Allow complexity and various emotions. How is solitude different from loneliness?

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

Let's try to use what we've wrestled with about loneliness and solitude as a way to analyze the assumptions in the original situation we looked at. As I again read the situation about being single while wanting a relationship, yet seeing others get what you desire...listen for the assumptions and beliefs that are present.

You've been single for quite some time despite actively pursuing a romantic relationship. You've always believed God rewards those who are faithful and have lived in accordance with traditional Christian values. Lately you've noticed that your friends with different moral standards, who don't pray or participate in church life, are in happy and committed relationships.

What is the belief or assumption about God in this scenario? (Discuss)

What are the assumptions and judgments made about “your friends with different moral standards”? (Discuss)

Note that the internal conflict or struggle in this situation comes from a belief about God (reward or taken care of for faithfulness) that is challenged by situations that seem to invalidate that belief (you aren't in a relationship and other unfaithful people are). Logic tells us either the belief about God is incomplete, or our knowledge of ourselves or others is incomplete.

Our pursuit of wisdom could be boiled down to this:

How does one receive from God the discernment about how to resolve this internal conflict?
What are some of your ideas about possible resolutions? (Discuss)

Do you think there is “a Christian way” to resolve it, or do you think there might be a variety of ways that are faithful to God? (Discuss)

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?

How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed prior to your next group meeting (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Mentoring Guide, Module 5

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Invite people to share homework and answer any questions that may have arisen since the last meeting. Inquire as to whether or not the participants recognized any of the themes touched on in the last meeting throughout the past few weeks.

Distribute the attached handout.

Discussion

How might wisdom be different from intelligence? When you think of a smart person who lacks wisdom, what is it that they seem to be missing?

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

Galatians 6: 7-10

Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

Some spiritual writers have used the phrase, "false attachments." What comes to mind when you think of a false attachment?

This passage is encouraging Christians to be freed from false attachments and worldly distractions.

While the writer tells us to do good to everyone, there is a focus on those who share our faith in Jesus Christ. One way of recognizing the Christian community is in the ability to love deeply and unconditionally. Loving friend and foe alike. In this well known passage we see love, in the Greek form of *agape*, which means charitable love, defined and put forth as the greatest of the spiritual gifts.

I Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about

injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

Your good friend got engaged last year. At the time of her engagement you discussed your concerns about her fiancé and the short time they'd known one another. You and your friend talked at length about the importance of a healthy marriage and about the pain and harm caused by divorce. As your friend got married you chose to stand by her and support her despite your concerns. Now a year later she comes to feeling desperately lonely and afraid she made a terrible mistake. Marriage is nothing like they imagined it would be. She is considering divorce. How do you advise and support your friend through this?

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem.

Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking.

Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. In the tension between happiness and holiness where might the definition of love found in Corinthians play a role?
3. How might the Christian community serve as a place of wisdom for this couple?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

John 8:1-11

Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" Then he stooped

down again and wrote in the dust. When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

"No, Lord," she said.

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about how Jesus showed compassion while also acknowledging sin. Allow complexity and various emotions.

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

Many have noticed that Jesus both forgives and protects the woman in adultery, while also calling her to a new life where she sins no more. That tension between compassion and judgment appears in the situation with the friend struggling in marriage. One part of us wants to offer compassion to the friend we love; another wants to judge and say, "I told you so."

In *A Testament of Devotion* Thomas Kelly writes:

"He (God) plucks the world out of our hearts, loosening the chains of attachment. And He hurls the world into our hearts, where we and He together carry it in infinitely tender love."

As you consider what you would say to your friend, what parts of "the world" or yourself could you imagine God needing to pluck out? What needs to be detached, what would you need to let go of? (Discuss)

What would you want God to give you, fill you with? How does God's "infinitely tender love" challenge and shape your own response to your friend? (Discuss)

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?

How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed prior to your next group meeting (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Mentoring Guide, Module 6

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Invite people to share homework and answer any questions that may have arisen since the last meeting. Inquire as to whether or not the participants recognized any of the themes touched on in the last meeting throughout the past few weeks.

Distribute the attached handout.

Discussion: Part of the research on wisdom points to the significance of knowing what's most important and essential to living life well. Having a clear understanding of one's own values and fundamental beliefs can provide a foundation and guiding light for wisdom. Here's a standard exercise used in positive psychology.

Create Your Ideal Life...

Choose your ideal combination of the options below, for the ideal life. You have \$21 in "life bucks" to use.

High self-esteem	\$1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	\$10
Positive Feelings (such as happiness, calm, excited, pleasant, proud, relaxed)	\$1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	\$10
The approval of your friends and family	\$1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	\$10
Getting along well with other people	\$1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	\$10

Source: Froh, J. J., & Parks, A. C. (2013). *Activities for teaching positive psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

As you allotted your \$21 in life bucks, did you find yourself wishing for some other options? What options would you want to add to this exercise? What matters most to you in life and how might this determine how wisdom develops?

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

Proverbs 8

Can you hear Madame Insight raising her voice?
 She's taken her stand at First and Main, at the busiest intersection.
 Right in the city square where the traffic is thickest, she shouts,
 "You—I'm talking to all of you, everyone out here on the streets!
 Listen, you idiots—learn good sense! You blockheads—shape up!
 Don't miss a word of this—I'm telling you how to live well, I'm telling you how to live at your best.
 My mouth chews and savors and relishes truth — I can't stand the taste of evil!
 You'll only hear true and right words from my mouth; not one syllable will be twisted or skewed.
 You'll recognize this as true—you with open minds; truth-ready minds will see it at once.
 Prefer my life-disciplines over chasing after money, and God-knowledge over a lucrative career.
 For Wisdom is better than all the trappings of wealth; nothing you could wish for holds a candle to her.

Lady Wisdom is the personification of divine wisdom. She is portrayed as providing inspiration and guidance for people who open their minds. She compels us to seek her in order to live life well and avoid darkness and evil. We often don't heed her warning and try to use wealth, power and other human strengths to solve the problems of our lives.

Do we sometimes lean too heavily on our own ability and insight without seeking assistance from God? How might intuition and inspiration be related when we try to address difficult and seemingly unsolvable problems?

Lady Wisdom relates to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which is also a source of light and guidance. Paul addresses some of the differences he perceives between "human wisdom" and wisdom that stems from the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:1-8

When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn't use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God's secret plan. For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified. I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God. Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten. No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord.

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

You've drifted away from one of your best friends in high school, but a couple of years later you rebuild a relationship. You come to realize that your friend's life is centered around alcohol, and even observe ways in which work and relationships are being negatively affected.

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem.

Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking.

Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. Do you bring the issue up with your friend? If so, what questions would you ask?
3. Would you ever seek the assistance of Lady Wisdom or the Holy Spirit in giving advice to your friend?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

Much of our discussion today has centered around Lady Wisdom and the Holy Spirit and how they can become an active presence in our own development of wisdom. This well known prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi (although it only dates to the year 1912) summarizes the way Christians are called to forget themselves and embody the self-emptying presence of God in the world.

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 Where there is injury, pardon;
 Where there is discord, harmony;
 Where there is error, truth;
 Where there is doubt, faith;
 Where there is despair, hope;
 Where there is darkness, light;
 And where there is sadness, joy.
 O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek
 To be consoled as to console;
 To be understood as to understand;
 To be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about this prayer and how wisdom relates to serving others before oneself.

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

In the situation with an old high school friend, there is tension. "Where there is error, (sow) truth." What responsibility do you have to speak the truth of the danger signs you see in their alcohol use? (Discuss)

The second half of the prayer, though, seems to speak a different message: "Grant that I may not so much seek...to be understood as to understand." What responsibility do you have to listen without correcting? To understand your friend rather than make your friend understand your concerns? (Discuss)

In your experience, is it more difficult to speak the truth as you see it, or is it more difficult to walk alongside someone and trust that God will bring conviction of the truth? (Discuss)

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?
How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed prior to your next group meeting (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Mentoring Guide, Module 7

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Invite people to share homework and answer any questions that may have arisen since the last meeting. Inquire as to whether or not the participants recognized any of the themes touched on in the last meeting throughout the past few weeks.

Distribute the attached handout.

Discussion

What's something in the news this week that stirs up emotion in you? (Discuss this)

What's the role of emotion in being wise and making wise decisions? How might wise people use their feelings to manifest wisdom? How might emotions hinder our ability to be wise? How might they help?

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

George Fox

“dwell in the life and love and power and wisdom of God, in unity one with another and with God; and the peace and wisdom of God fill your hearts, that nothing may rule in you but the life, which stands in the Lord God.”

Look at John 1:14. Jesus is described as being filled with truth and grace. For most of us, we tend to lean one way or another, toward truth or toward grace, and we have a hard time doing both at the same time. Jesus was filled with both.

The Christian life is built around these two key elements: God's eternal truth is a plumb line, helping us know what is good and right. God's grace is unconditional love and acceptance of us as sinners. These two aspects often come into conflict in human experience and relationships. As Grace without Truth can lead to an undisciplined life of licentiousness, where Truth without Grace can become cold and legalistic.

What function can wisdom have in bringing Truth and Grace into a harmonious balance? Have you ever felt God's peace and wisdom fill your hearts?

One place where Grace and Truth should be experienced is in the Christian community. However, Grace and Truth are often blocked by our sin; both original and personal sin. As we struggle to accept each other and ourselves in our fallen state, the apostle Paul encourages us in the book of Romans. He writes about Christ's acceptance of us being the foundation for our

acceptance of others. This leads to a unity that symbolizes the greatness of God and provides hope.

Romans 15:6-9

Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory. Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: "For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name."

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

You're a leader for college age ministry at a church that believes sexuality should only be expressed between a man and a woman in a marriage relationship. You're hosting a barbecue for the students at your home, and one of the young women asks if she can bring her girlfriend.

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem.

Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking.

Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. How does this problem relate to the topic of grace and truth? Do we tend to show preference of one over the other?
3. To whom would you go to ask for perspective? How would you communicate your answer?
4. What are the issues you consider as you make your decision?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

The word became flesh

John 1:1-5 & 14

In the beginning the Word already existed.
 The Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 He existed in the beginning with God.
 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him.
 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.
 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it...

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father full of grace and truth.

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about how the light of Christ can expand our vision and lead to wisdom?

1. What does it tell us about God that God chose to come and "dwell among us"?
2. Verse 14 describes God as full of grace and truth. Do you see examples of this from Jesus' life?

Lesslie Newbigin spent his life as a missionary in India. He also spent much of his life thinking and writing about mission. He grounded his understanding of missions in God's first mission: the Word becoming flesh. Newbigin writes, "the mission of Jesus was not only to proclaim the kingdom of God but also to embody the presence of the kingdom of God in his own person."

Jesus didn't simply come to tell us about God but Jesus came as the embodiment of God: to show us who God is. Similarly, when the Christian community embodies grace and truth we are not just proclaiming the kingdom of God but embodying the presence of God's Kingdom.

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

There is such beauty in the truth that the glory of Jesus the Word dwelt with us, lived with us, came near to us. When have you been part of a community or group where the glory of Jesus seemed so present and real?

How did it feel? (Discuss)

Does the phrase "glory of Jesus" seem to draw you closer, attract you, or does it seem too holy, seem to almost push you away? (Discuss)

"The Light shines in the darkness..." Imagine first a light drawing all moths and bugs to it. Then imagine a World War II prison camp, a spotlight on the wall, shining to find you as you try to escape.

What picture would you use to describe how you understand Jesus as Light coming into the world? (Discuss)

How does your picture of who Jesus is affect how you see others who you believe are living in "darkness"? (Discuss)

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?

How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed prior to your next group meeting (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Mentoring Guide, Module 8

Introduction and Community Building (15-20 minutes)

Congratulate the participants as they begin their final session. Invite people to share homework and answer any questions that may have arisen since the last meeting. Inquire as to whether or not the participants recognized any of the themes touched on in any of the previous sessions throughout the past week?

Distribute the attached handout.

Discussion

How has this ministry changed you? To what extent do you feel that you've grown in wisdom? Have you noticed any changes in people around you such as family or friends, have they mentioned any in you?

Devotional Thought (5-10 minutes)

As much as possible, do this dialogically, inviting input and thoughts from participants.

2 Corinthians 12: 9-10

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Wisdom is a virtue that has been sought by many different religions and cultures throughout the ages. It is often seen as an expression of the best in humanity and the pinnacle/height of character strength leading to a good, happy and fulfilled life. However, the apostle Paul understands weakness to be his strength through Christ.

As we strive to live a life of Christian virtue and holiness, do we recognize the role persecution and struggle have in developing wisdom?

The movement from weakness to strength in Christ may reside in our ability to be honest with ourselves about what we can and cannot do on our own. Ultimately it is grace that lifts us up and elevates our lives to a place where the wisdom of God can dwell.

Being honest about our own failings can be difficult, but it often serves as a prerequisite for further growth not only within ourselves but also in our relationships with others. As we see in this passage from Luke, it was Zacchaeus's ability to admit that he was a sinner who needed to repent and make amends that lead to his redemption. Notice also how he first hears the call of Jesus and responds with "excitement and joy."

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

Pose Contemporary Problem (10-15 minutes)

Your workplace asks all employees to go to a seminar to avoid sexual harassment in the office. While your behavior has been above reproach at work, you are shocked to realize while listening to the presenter that you likely were coercive sexually in a previous relationship. You are not currently in that relationship.

Discuss initial reactions and impressions related to this problem.

Please do not try to resolve the tension participants are feeling or answer the difficult questions they are asking.

Allow participants to feel the discomfort and uncertainty of this situation. They may also want to ask clarifying questions, which means you may need to make up additional details to address the questions being asked.

Some questions you might want to pose to the group are:

1. What sort of internal stirrings do you experience in response to this situation?
2. How do you deal with the guilt and shame you now feel?
3. How might guilt and shame work against the cultivation of finding wisdom in this problem?

4. What will you do to make amends? Is it ok to commit to better behavior in the future and not address the past?

Waiting (10-15 minutes)

As we learn to call to mind our own personal sins and failings, it may be helpful to remember that we all inherit a fallen nature and are susceptible to choosing the forbidden fruit.

Genesis 3:1-5

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?"

"Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"

"You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil."

Don't invite conversation right away. Encourage people to sit silently and wait for God's wisdom. As people feel prompted to speak, they are encouraged to do so.

After some time of waiting, encourage participants to discuss what comes to mind about how this passage and the way original sin affects each one of us. Allow complexity and various emotions.

How does the wisdom experienced in the Christian community counteract the knowledge promised by the Serpent in the story of the Fall?

Return to Problem (10-15 minutes)

Conviction leads to trying to act differently because we are more valuable than we are currently demonstrating by our actions. Shame leads to believing we aren't worth anything. What truths from Genesis remind us of our value and worth in God's eyes? (Discuss)

How might you apply those truths to yourself in the situation presented about guilt for past sexual mistakes? (Discuss)

What truths from Genesis remind us we can be deceived and we can make poor choices? (Discuss)

How might we respond to our poor choices differently than Eve? What from Jesus' life do you remember as a healthy way to respond to being convicted of wrongdoing? (Discuss)

Finally, how do we determine when conviction of my wrong choices can be dealt with on my own, and when my actions have hurt others and require me to ask forgiveness? What wisdom has your experience, or your community, or the bible given to you in this regard? (Discuss)

Discernment in Other Life Situations (15-20 minutes)

How did you experience wisdom today?

How does today's conversation help you in relation to other life situations you are facing?

Wisdom Practices

Please assign these wisdom practices to be completed in upcoming days (see handout).

After the Group

Please complete your process journal after the group meeting is over.

Appendix B

Curriculum Vitae

PAUL McLAUGHLIN

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pmclaughlin12@georgefox.edu

EDUCATION

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Present | <p>Psy.D., Clinical Psychology
 Emphasis Area—Religion and Spirituality
 <i>George Fox University, Newberg, OR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA Accredited • Anticipated Graduation May 2017 |
| 2014 | <p>MA, Clinical Psychology
 <i>George Fox University, Newberg, OR</i></p> |
| 2011 | <p>MA, Theology/Christian Ministry
 <i>Franciscan University, Steubenville, OH</i></p> |
| 2007 | <p>BA, Religious Studies, Minor in Philosophy
 <i>University of California Santa Barbara, Goleta, CA</i></p> |

CLINICAL TRAINING

- 2015-Present **Pre-internship Student, Graduate**
Concordia University Counseling and Testing Center, Portland, OR
- *Population:* undergraduate and graduate students, adolescents, adults, diverse population, first-generation students
 - Provide individual weekly and bi-weekly therapy for undergraduate and graduate students struggling with trauma, anxiety, depression, and interpersonal problems
 - Implement interventions utilizing evidenced based treatments, such as supportive psychotherapy, brief psychodynamic therapy, cognitive therapy, mindfulness, and emotion focused techniques
 - Administer LD/ADHD and personality assessments, such as WAIS-IV, D-KEFS, PAI, MMPI-2, and CAARS
 - Compose integrated reports and make recommendations for accommodations

- Conduct intake interviews, develop case conceptualizations and treatment plans
- Outreach with university students, including trainings on sexual assault and psychoeducation for resident assistants
- Supervisors: Jaklin Peake, MA, LPC., Joel Gregor, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist

2015

Supplemental Practicum: Clergy Assessment*Private Practice, Newberg, OR*

- Assist licensed psychologist/ministerial specialist in assessing the psychological fitness of clergy candidates for active ministry
- Co-conduct clinical interviews with candidates for ministry, and candidate's spouse
- Administer and score personality assessments (MMPI-2 and 16PF)
- Administer Rorschach Inkblot Test and score using Exner system
- Write integrated reports and make recommendations
- Supervisor: Nancy Thurston, Psy.D., ABPP/CL, Licensed Psychologist

2014-2015

Practicum II Student, Graduate*Chehalem Counseling Center (Community Mental Health), Newberg, OR*

- *Population:* rural community population from teens to elderly, lower SES, homeless, residential teens, families, and couples
- Provide individual and group psychotherapy for treatment of acute and complex trauma, addiction, abuse, depression, anxiety, and obsessive compulsive disorder
- Conduct therapy utilizing evidenced based treatments, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, dialectical behavioral therapy, mindfulness, brief psychodynamic therapy, and attachment therapy for couples and families
- Provide group psychotherapy for adolescents in residential care, including psychoeducation on emotion regulation, mindfulness, and positive psychology
- Provide group psychotherapy on emotional regulation for women living in a homeless shelter
- Provide family and couples psychotherapy, utilizing attaches based treatment
- Conduct intake interviews
- Write intake reports, mental health assessments, case conceptualizations, and treatment plans
- Supervisor: Holly Hetrick, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist, Director of Clinical Training

2013-2014

Practicum I Student, Graduate

George Fox University Health and Counseling Center, Newberg, OR

- *Population:* Undergraduate and Graduate students, adolescents, adults, diverse population, first generation students
- Provide weekly and bi-weekly individual therapy for treatment of depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, abuse, trauma, and interpersonal problems
- Conduct therapy using evidenced based treatments, such as solution focused, cognitive behavioral therapy, and mindfulness techniques
- Conduct intake interviews, diagnosis, develop treatment plans and conceptualizations
- Write formal intake reports and complete termination summaries
- Create psychoeducation materials for college counseling center
- Supervisor: Bill Burrow, Psy.D. Licensed Psychologist, Director of George Fox University Health and Counseling Center

2013

Pre-Practicum II Student, Graduate

George Fox University, Newberg, OR

- *Population:* Undergraduate students
- Provide therapy for two individual students
- Utilize client-centered orientation
- Conduct intake interviews and develop treatment plans
- Write formal intake reports and complete termination summaries
- Supervisors: Carlos Taloyo, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Dissertation

- Doctoral Dissertation, Prelim Passed: *The Effects of a Wisdom Intervention in a Christian Congregation*
Dissertation chair: Dr. Mark McMinn, Ph.D., ABPP/CL

Research Vertical Team Member

- Assist team members in design of various research projects
 - Formal presentations of research projects and results
-

SELECTED GRANTS AND HONORS

John Templeton Foundation grant (#45112)

Awarded \$10,000 for dissertation research involving collaboration between positive psychology and a Christian congregation

Richter Scholars Program

Awarded \$750 for dissertation research to help pay for research expenditures

PUBLICATIONS

McLaughlin, P., & McMinn, M. R. (2015). Studying wisdom: Toward a Christian integrative perspective. *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 43(2), 121-130.

McMinn, M. R., McLaughlin, P. T., Johnson, B. C., & Shoup, R. (2016). Psychotherapy and the theological virtues. *Open Theology*, 2, 422-433.

NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

McLaughlin, Paul. (April, 2014). *A Psychology of Wisdom and its Relationship to Religion and Spirituality*. Paper presented at APA Division 36: Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality, 12th Annual Mid-Year Conference on Religion and Spirituality.

McMinn, M., Bufford, R., McLaughlin, P., Moody, J., Geczy-Haskins, L. & Uher, J. (March, 2016). *Grace, Gratitude, and Wisdom Go to Church: Investigating Positive Psychology in Christian Faith Communities*. Symposium presented at the Annual International Convention for the Christian Association for Psychological Studies (Los Angeles, CA).

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

2014 **THEORIES OF PERSONALITY and PSYCHOTHERAPY: Three credit course**

George Fox University Department of Counseling, Portland, OR

- Master's in Counseling Program
- Supervise and facilitate group learning and clinical skills building
- Conduct lectures and facilitate group learning and clinical skills building
- Purpose of the course is to introduce students to various theoretical orientations and theories of personality

2014 **INTERPERSONAL NEUROBIOLOGY and PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY: One credit course**

George Fox University Graduate Department of Counseling, Portland, OR

- Master's in Counseling Program
- Supervise and facilitate group learning and clinical skills building
- Conduct lectures and facilitate group learning and clinical skills building
- Purpose of the course is to learn the role of neurobiology and

interpersonal relationships, and introduce basic psychopharmacological drugs

2015 **TEACHING ASSISTANT**
George Fox University, Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology,
Newberg, Oregon
Graduate Level Course: Religious and Spiritual Diversity
Professor: Winston Seegobin, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist

2015 **TEACHING ASSISTANT**
George Fox University, Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology,
Newberg, Oregon
Graduate Level Course: Bible Survey for Psychologists
Professor: Winston Seegobin, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist

2015 **TEACHING ASSISTANT**
George Fox University, Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology,
Newberg, Oregon
Graduate Level Course: Psychodynamic Theory
Professor: Nancy Thurston, Psy.D., Licensed Psychologist

2015 **TEACHING ASSISTANT**
George Fox University, Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology,
Newberg, Oregon
Graduate Level Course: Psychopharmacology
Professor: Glenna Andrews, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist

SUPERVISION EXPERIENCES

2015 **PEER OVERSIGHT**
Graduate Level Oversight, George Fox University, Graduate Department
of Clinical Psychology, Newberg, Oregon
Graduate Level Course: Supervision and Management
Professor: Rodger Bufford, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2014 **Residential Associate**
Columbia Care, Portland, OR

- Residential care of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness
- Support and development of life skills and therapeutic interventions
- Perform housekeeping, meal preparation, and medication administration

- 2008-2011 **Academic Counselor**
Franciscan University, Steubenville, OH
- Work with students in academic advising office
 - Create schedules, time management strategies and study plans
 - Counsel students in areas of life that adversely impact their academic goals
 - Prepare new and incoming students with the necessary skills to be successful in college

- 2008-2010 **Substitute Teacher**
Saint Bonaventure High School, Ventura, CA
- Observe and evaluate the students' performance, behavior, and social development
 - Adapt teaching methods and instructional materials to meet students' varying needs and interests
 - Plan and conduct activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and work time
 - Instruct students individually and in groups, using various teaching methods such as lectures, discussions, and demonstrations

AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

- 2015-Present Christian Association for Psychological Studies (student member)
 2015-Present Catholic Psychotherapy Association (student member)
 2015-Present Existential-Humanistic Northwest Organization (student liaison)
 2013-Present Society for Exploration of Psychoanalytic Therapies and Theology
 2012-Present American Psychological Association (student member)

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

- 2014-Present Psychodynamic Discussion Group: Society that meets monthly to discuss cases from a psychodynamic perspective.
Consultant: Kurt Free, Ph.D.
- 2012-Present Clinical Team: Consultation group that meets weekly to present and discuss cases from various clinical perspectives.
Consultants: Paul Stoltzfus, Psy.D., CL; Mark McMinn, Ph.D., ABPP/CL; Nancy Thurston, Ph.D., ABPP/CL
- 2016 "Neuropsychology: What Do We Know 15 Years After the Decade of the Brain?"
Speaker: Dr. Trevor Hall, Psy.D.
Site: George Fox University

- 2015 "Relational Psychoanalysis and Christian Faith: A Heuristic Dialogue"
Speaker: Marie Hoffman, Ph.D.
Site: George Fox University
- 2015 "Signs and Symptoms of Eating Disorders"
Speaker: Zanita B. Zody, Ph.D. LMFT
Site: Concordia University, Portland, Oregon
- 2015 "Existential-Integrative Therapy: New Horizons in Practice"
Speaker: Kirk J. Scheider, Ph.D.
Site: Oregon Psychological Association, Annual Conference, May 1-2
- 2015 "Spiritual Formation and Psychotherapy"
Speaker: Barrett McRay, Psy.D.
Site: George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon
- 2014 "FaceTime in Age of Technological Attachment"
Speaker: Doreen Dodgen-Magee
Site: George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon
- 2014 "DSM V: Essential Changes in Form & Function"
Speaker: Jeri Turgesen, Psy.D. and Mary Peterson, Ph.D.
Site: George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon
- 2014 Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy. Medical University of South Carolina Web-Based Training.
- 2013 "Integrated Health Care: Salud Medical Clinic"
Speaker: Brian Sandoval, Psy.D. and Juliette Cutts, Psy.D.
Site: George fox University, Newberg, OR
- 2013 "The Person of the Therapist: How Spiritual Practice Weaves with Therapeutic Encounter"
Speaker: Dr. Brook Kuhnhausen, Ph.D.
Site: George Fox University, Newberg, OR
- 2013 "African American History, Culture and Addictions and Mental Health Treatment"
Speaker: Danette C. Haynes, LCSW, Clinical Director and Marcus Sharpe, Psy.D.
Site: George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon

REFERENCES

References can be provided upon request. Please send an email to pmclaughlin12@georgefox.edu for contact information.