

Take-Home for Session 1: All Wisdom Comes from the Lord

If You Come Forward to Serve: An Inductive Study of Sirach

What We Found

- We met Jesus Ben Sira, a scribe teaching in Jerusalem around 200 to 175 BC, and his grandson, who translated the book into Greek in Egypt after 132 BC and left us the only translator's preface in the Bible.
- All wisdom comes from the Lord (1:1). It is a gift given to those who love and obey him, not a trophy for the clever.
- The fear of the Lord is wisdom's beginning, root, fullness, and crown, and Ben Sira pairs it with gladness, joy, and long life. It matures, by grace, into the loving reverence of a child for a good father: awe that draws near rather than terror that flees.
- The book left us with open questions we will carry forward, including one you have sealed in the box below.

Voices of the Church

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: St. Augustine of Hippo

Augustine opens his *Confessions* with the insight that frames this whole study: God has made us for himself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in him. The search for wisdom is finally a search for God, and it begins when we stop pretending we are its source.

Confessions, Book I, 1 (paraphrased)

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: St. Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas distinguishes servile fear, which dreads punishment, from filial fear, which dreads being separated from the Father we love. Even imperfect fear, he teaches, can begin a soul's movement toward wisdom, and filial fear belongs to wisdom's flowering: fear matures alongside love rather than shrinking as love grows.

Summa Theologiae II-II, q. 19 (paraphrased)

VOICE OF THE CHURCH: St. Francis de Sales

Francis insisted that the pursuit of wisdom and devotion is not reserved for monks and priests. Every state of life, the soldier, the tradesman, the married person, can and must seek holiness where it stands. Ben Sira, teaching ordinary learners the way of wisdom in daily life, breathes the same conviction.

Introduction to the Devout Life, Part I (paraphrased)

Live It This Week

- Each day this week, before you open your phone in the morning, pray one sentence: Lord, give me the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom.

- Write your sealed My Guess answer on the Take-Home sheet and bring it back every week without showing anyone.
- Read the Prologue and Sirach 1 once more on your own, slowly, and underline every word connected to joy or gladness. Count them.

Scripture Memory Verse

"To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; she is created with the faithful in the womb." (**Sirach 1:14**)

Before Next Session

Read Sirach 2 (it is short, 18 verses). Read it twice.

Catechism References

CCC 105-108; CCC 120; CCC 1831

MY GUESS (sealed until Session 8)

Who or what do you think Wisdom really is in this book? Write your answer below, show no one, and bring this sheet back every week.
