

Introduction

How many of you know the name Kim Ung-Yong? It's because of his IQ if you do. The IQ scale is as follows: (1) 90-109: average intelligence; (2) 110-124: above average intelligence; (3) 125-134: gifted; (4) 135-144: highly gifted; (5) 145-154: genius; (6) 155-164: high genius; (6) 165-179: higher genius; (7) 180-200: highest genius; and (8) 200+: immeasurable genius. Kim Ung-Yong began speaking by the age of 6 months and was able to read Japanese, Korean, German, and English and to easily solve complicated calculus equations by the age of 3. He earned his Ph.D. degree in physics at the age of 16 and is listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the smartest person on earth. His IQ is over 210. It's immeasurable in other words.

But as impressive as Yong is, I'm going to preach about One who was and is far smarter than him. That One is Jesus.

The Smartest Person Who Ever Lived

Paul wrote his letter to the church at Colossae to combat false teachers, verses 4-5, who had entered and upset it and the church at Laodicea as well. He had never visited either of those churches, but expresses his deep concern for them in verse 1. He then reveals two things he prayed for them in verse 2. One was that they would remain unified in love despite the efforts of the false teachers to divide them. The other was that they would grow in their understanding of the mystery that God revealed, that is, Jesus and His gospel. Notice what they would attain if they did, in verse 2. It's **"all the wealth."** Those words emphasize how beneficial understanding Jesus and His gospel is.

There's a reason it is, which Paul identifies in verse 3. It's that in Jesus are hidden **"all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."** That is a compelling statement. The word **"knowledge"** refers to insight into reality. The word **"wisdom"** refers to the beneficial application of that insight to life. The word **"all"** suggests that Jesus is utterly wise and

utterly knowledgeable and that is in fact the case. His insight into reality and His ability to apply it beneficially to life are, because He's God, infinite, perfect, and complete.

When He came to earth in the flesh, He did "**empty Himself**" as Paul said it in Philippians 2:7. But those words, despite what many preachers say, don't mean that He gave up His divinity or set it aside. They do mean that He concealed it "**under a veil of flesh**" as John Calvin said it. His divinity, including His wisdom and knowledge, were still operative within Him during His earthly life.

That implies many things, one of which is this. Jesus was the smartest person who ever lived and I mean during His earthly life. That's a fact and I'd put it into perspective this way. He had a higher IQ than Kim Un-Yong does. He was far more capable cognitively than Yong is. I'd go so far as to say that Yong is a mental midget compared to Him. He was far smarter than any person ever has been or will be.

Smartness is a difficult thing to define. But for our purposes, think of it this way. It's functioning highly in knowledge, reasoning, memory, understanding, problem solving, reaction time, and visual processing. Those are the components of intelligence and Jesus, during His earthly life, functioned far more highly in them than any person ever has or will. His level of functioning in fact was immeasurably high.

The Master of Those Who Know and Reason

But let's focus on two of those components, the ones in verse 3, to flesh out what smartness is.

One is knowledge. In Jesus are hidden all the treasures of knowledge. In his epic poem *Divine Comedy*, the Christian poet Dante developed the title, "**the Master of those who know.**" That is an apt title for Jesus. He knew more, by far, than anyone ever has known or will know. He is quite literally "**the Master of those who know.**"

But what did He know? Stop for a moment and think about all the possible fields of endeavor like microbiology, geology, sociology, physics,

chemistry, psychology, religion, philosophy, economics, and genetics to name a few. Well, Jesus knew everything there was to know about them all. How much do you know about wave particle duality in quantum physics? How much do you know about monetarism theory in economics? How much do you know about hereditary thrombophilic risk factors in genetics? I know nothing about those things. But Jesus could have told His disciples everything about them because that's what He knew – everything about them. He was the Master of knowledge.

He was also the Master of reasoning. In Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom. Wisdom has to do with reasoning or logic. Logic is a branch of philosophy that studies the principles of demonstration and inference. It's the study of reasoning. Reasoning refers to mentally connecting up premises (assumptions we have) and drawing conclusions from them. That's what reasoning is and the gospel narratives are permeated with Jesus' brilliant use of it. He had phenomenal powers of logical thinking and used them to preach, teach, correct, and live.

Examples of what I mean are found in Matthew 5:27-30, Matthew 12:1-8, Mark 11:27-33, Luke 13:15-16, and Luke 20:41-44. In Matthew 5:27-30, for instance, He used a logical device called "**reductio ad absurdum.**" Or in Mark 11:29-30, He used a logical device called "**dilemma syllogism.**" Those texts make it perfectly clear. He was as much the Master of reasoning or logic as He was of knowledge.

But He was also the Master of every other component of smartness. He was the Master of memory, the Master of understanding, the Master of problem solving, the Master of reaction time, and the Master of visual processing. He functioned at the highest possible level in each of those. He was, in other words, the smartest person who ever lived. He was what no other person has been or will be – utterly smart.

View Jesus as the Smartest Person

The problem is that almost no one, including Christians, thinks of Him that way.

Why? It's because the world, for the most part, opposes intelligence to goodness. I think of an old Russian proverb in that regard. It speaks of those who are "**stupid to the point of sanctity.**" The meaning is that we have to be really dumb to be really good. How many of you, for instance, have heard it said that Mother Teresa was good? How many of you have heard it said that she was smart? She was but almost no one thinks of her that way. The world (the masses) seems to believe that great intelligence and great goodness can't possibly be combined.

That explains why almost no one, including Christians, thinks of Jesus as having been smart. I mentioned the Christian poet Dante and the title he developed, "**the Master of those who know.**" Does anyone know to whom he applied it in the *Divine Comedy*? It wasn't Jesus. It was Aristotle instead. The truth is that most Christians consider Aristotle smarter than Jesus was.

But that has to change if we're going to be disciples of His. We must reject the dichotomy that opposes intelligence to goodness and view Him as He really was – not only utterly good but utterly smart as well. We must also view His words as they really were - the best possible information about the most important matters in human life. He didn't tell us everything about every matter. He did tell us the best things about the most important matters.

Take sex as an example of this. It's so important that sex education is now a standard component of the Western educational system. But its curriculums don't consider Jesus an expert on the subject. They don't even mention His teachings and Him. But they should. What He said in texts like Song of Songs 8:6, Job 31:1-4, Matthew 5:27-30, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, and 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 reveal the most significant of all insights about sex. The sex lives of human beings cannot be right and good unless they know and live out those insights.

That demonstrates what we need to do. View Jesus as He was, the smartest person who ever lived, and His words as they were – the best possible information about the most important matters in human life.

Learn and Do All that He Said

Since He and they were that, it only makes sense to learn and do all that He said – and we must to be disciples and friends of His.

It's critical that you and I grasp something about us. We all have our teachers. We all have learned and continue to learn from others how to live. There are no exceptions to that. That fact is that little of what we know is the product of our own individual and independent insight into reality. I know, for instance, that it's impossible to touch a person's body in sex and not touch his or her soul, which means there's no such thing as casual sex. Or I know that anything that can be done with anger can be better done without it. I didn't get those life-defining truths through my own individual and independent thought. I learned them from others instead. That's the case with probably 80% of what I know. I learned it from others.

There's no doubt about it. We all have our teachers. We all have learned and continue to learn from others how to live.

But remember what Jesus said in that regard, **"a pupil is not above his teacher."** He was saying that pupils usually don't become better persons and live better lives than the teachers from whom they learn. It's imperative, therefore, that we learn from the best. Well, the best, by far, is Jesus. So, it only makes sense to go to Him first to learn how to live. We go to Him first by doing two things.

First, study all that He said. During His earthly life, He talked about the person who **"hears My words."** He lived in an oral culture. We live in a typographic one. The equivalent of **"hear,"** therefore, is **"study"** and so, that's what we do. We study His words, all that He said.

Notice I said **"study"** and not **"read."** We can read the Gospels and get a general grasp of what Jesus said. Or we can study them and get a detailed grasp of what He said. The detailed grasp is far more beneficial and life transforming than the general grasp is. Studying enables us to do what reading doesn't – interpret and understand what He said.

So, let's study all He said and I mean that literally, **"all."** Let's set

and devotedly pursue this goal - to interpret and understand everything He said in the Gospels before we die. The Apprenticeship Groups we're forming will assist you in doing that.

We go to Jesus first by doing a second thing. We **"do"** or **"act on"** all that He said. We make the decision to live it out. We then try and train the best we can to carry out that decision. Again, the Apprenticeship Groups will assist you in doing that.

Some years ago, I counseled a bitter Christian whose former business partner had just sued her. I helped her learn what Jesus said about that in Matthew 5:25-26 and 5:40. She shouldn't defend the lawsuit with anger and malice but with love instead. She should care about the plaintiff and sacrifice her interests for his when it was just and good to do so. Jesus is **"the"** Authority on how to prosecute and defend lawsuits and she'd be wise, I told her, to do what He said.

Or a Christian attorney won a big personal injury case and became almost a millionaire by doing so. He should have done two things. One was to learn in detail what Jesus said about money in texts like Matthew 6:19-24, Mark 10:17-27, and Luke 16:1-13. The other was then to live out what He said. He didn't do either of those though and became self-consumed as a result. Jesus is **"the"** authority on money and wealth and thus, we're wise to learn and do what He said about that.

Conclusion

I close with an observation. Our culture offers us a countless array of teachers or **"life coaches"** as they're called, including Dr. Phil, Martha Beck, Anthony Robbins, Wayne Dyer, Deepak Chopra, Joel Osteen, and Stephen Covey to name a few. I'd say two things about that. First, go only to those whose character and smartness make them good teachers. And second, go to them second of all, only after you've gone to Jesus first of all. Learn and do all that He said, first. Why? It's because He was and is not only the best person who ever lived, but the smartest as well - utterly smart.

Question #2

Can a person be considered educated who doesn't know what Jesus taught?

We must come to grips with this fact about the cultural environment in which we live. As Max Picard describes it, it's in the advanced stages of **"the flight from God."** Those who run our social institutions and the masses themselves think and act as if the triune God generally and Jesus Himself particularly don't exist. They don't take Jesus or His words into account at all in the things they decide and do.

This flight from Jesus is a palpable one that takes sundry forms, one of the most vivid of which is how it judges competence. Consider, for instance, the subject matter or practices that our institutions and fields of endeavor declare must be mastered to be competent. Whether it's public administration, education, physics, law enforcement, medicine, or any other field of expertise, that subject matter and those practices exclude Jesus and His teachings. Attorneys, physicians, and architects, to name a few, can be licensed and declared fit to practice, and know nothing about Him and them. Dallas Willard's assessment is an instructive one: **"In any context in which people are supposed to be smart and informed, even the most thoughtful and devout Christian will find it hard to make a convincing presentation of the relevance of God and his spiritual world to 'real life.'"** Our cultural context, in other words is **"soaked with secularity."** It has little room for Jesus and the principles, precepts, and propositions that He taught.

But this exclusion of Jesus is a huge mistake of reality. Jesus was, during His earthly life, and still is the smartest person who ever lived. As Paul wrote in Colossians 2:3, **"in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."** He knew and knows everything there is to know about everything, a small part of which He revealed to us during His three years of earthly ministry as recorded in the Gospels. And what He revealed, because He's as wise as He is knowledgeable, constitutes the best possible information about the most important matters in human life.

The implication is profound. In the Bible, Jesus taught us the most significant of all insights about sex. Can a sex therapist be truly competent if he or she doesn't know what He taught. Jesus taught us the most significant of all insights about the value of human beings. Can a policeman be truly competent if he or she doesn't know what He taught. Jesus taught us the most significant of all insights about the nature of human beings. Can a teacher or professor be truly competent if he or she doesn't know what Jesus taught. The answer is a resound **"No!"** Jesus is the fundamental reality of the universe and life in it and His statements about that universe and life are the most defining of all statements about them. We are not, therefore, truly educated and competent unless we know and live them out.