



The Anatomy of Moral Vision

Examining John 8 through the cognitive science of human attention, hemisphere theory, and the four ways of knowing.

Every story in Scripture is a story about how we see

The Event



The Narrative

In John 8, the Pharisees drag a woman caught in adultery before Jesus to trap him.

The Conflict

Two radically different modes of human attention colliding in real-time.

The Lens



The Mechanics

Modern neuroscience and cognitive psychology reveal exactly why the Pharisees and Jesus look at the exact same situation but see two completely different realities.

The Narrow Frame: Left-Hemisphere Attention

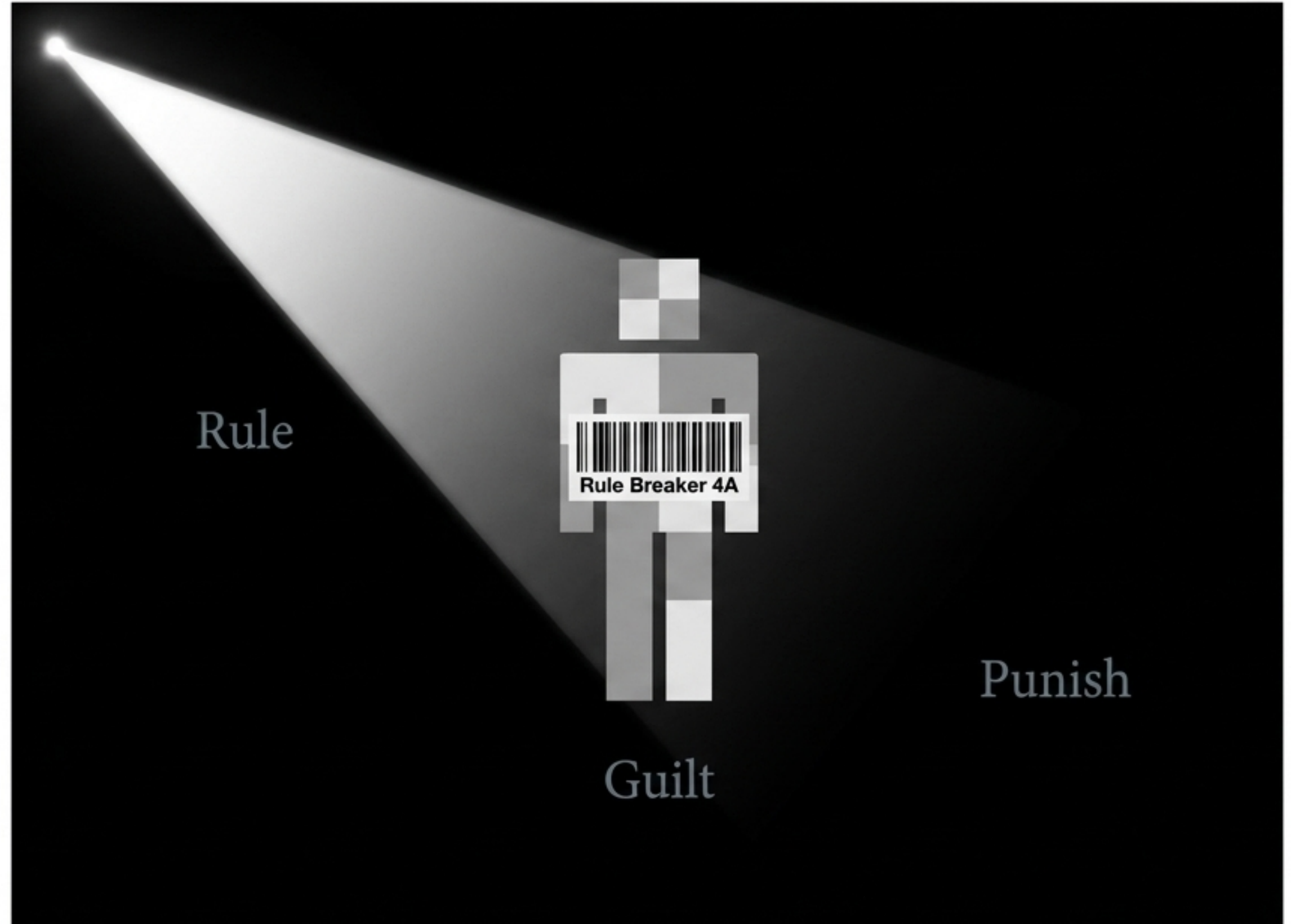
Neuroscientist Iain McGilchrist describes left-hemisphere attention as abstract, rigid, and decontextualized. It fixates on categories and prefers certainty over understanding.

The Pharisaical Lens

- Sees the person as a case to be solved or a problem to be categorized.
- Emphasizes correctness over compassion.
- Reduces complex human reality to simple binaries.

The Moral Danger

You can be completely right in proposition, but entirely wrong in spirit.



The Outer Shells of Knowing

Cognitive scientist John Vervaeke outlines distinct ways human beings know the world. The Pharisees rely exclusively on the outer two layers to construct a trap:

- 1. Propositional Knowing** (Knowing that)
Facts, doctrines, and rules. (The Law says... Moses commanded us...)
Strength: Precision.
Limitation: Detached from lived reality.
- 2. Procedural Knowing** (Knowing how)
Skills and mechanics. (How to execute the penalty of the rule).
Strength: Effective action.
Limitation: Becomes mechanical without context.

The Result

Without context and compassion, rules become weapons.

The Architecture of the Trap



The Wide Frame: Right-Hemisphere Attention

Jesus embodies right-hemisphere attention: open, relational, and highly contextual.

The Expansive Lens

- Sees the whole living reality, not just the isolated parts.
- Attends to the person before the abstraction.
- Perceives what a specific situation dynamically calls for.

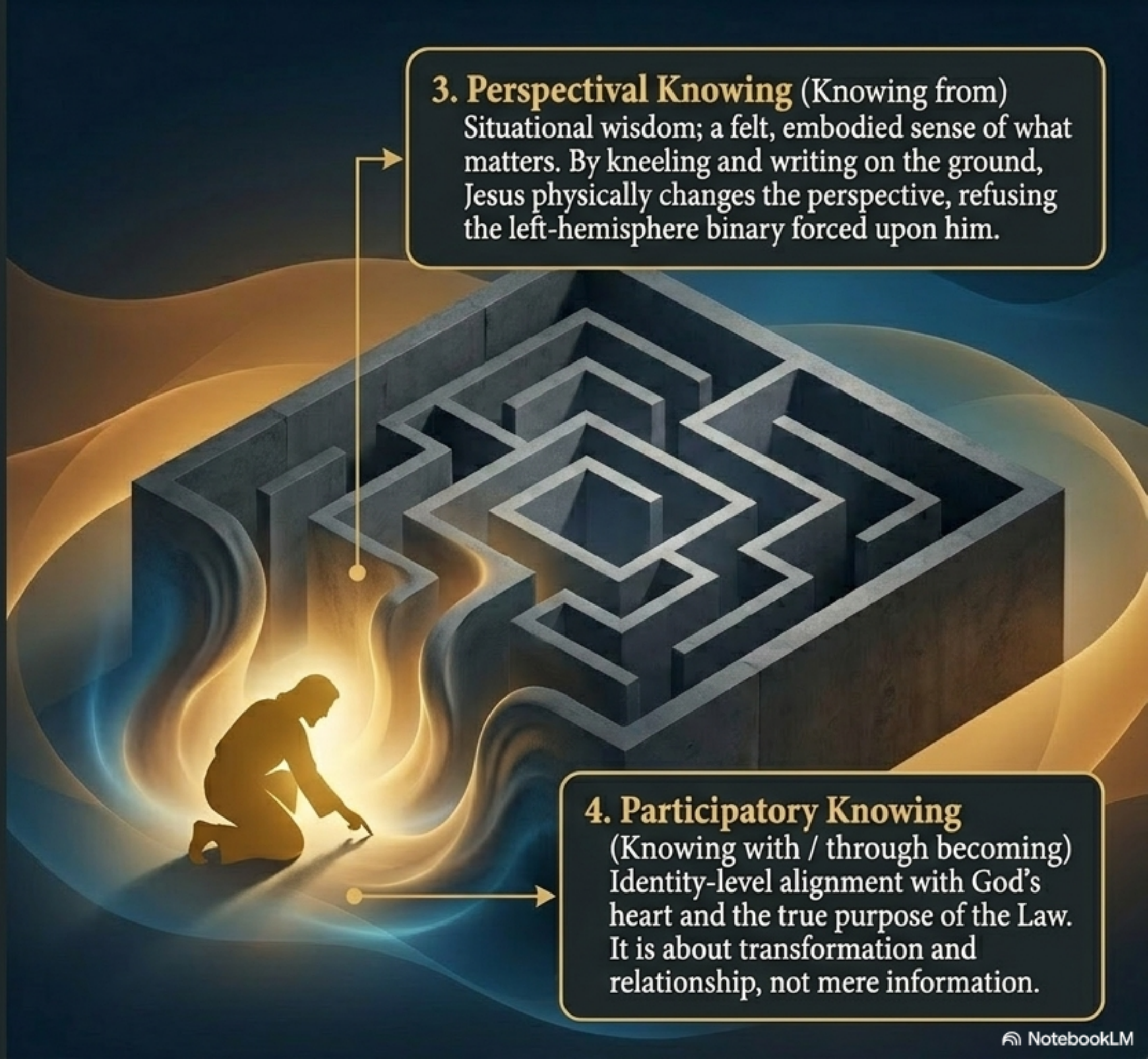
The Moral Strength

Sees reality as a living whole, grasping lived meaning before jumping to judgment.



The Deep Core of Knowing

Jesus navigates the trap by activating Vervaeke's deeper forms of intelligence:



3. Perspectival Knowing (Knowing from)
Situational wisdom; a felt, embodied sense of what matters. By kneeling and writing on the ground, Jesus physically changes the perspective, refusing the left-hemisphere binary forced upon him.

4. Participatory Knowing
(Knowing with / through becoming)
Identity-level alignment with God's heart and the true purpose of the Law. It is about transformation and relationship, not mere information.

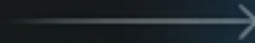
Diagnostic: Two Distinct Architectures of Attention

	The Narrow Frame (Pharisees)	The Wide Frame (Jesus)
The Mode of Attention	Left Hemisphere (Abstract, Decontextualized, Control)	Right Hemisphere (Relational, Contextual, Open)
The Depth of Knowing	Propositional & Procedural (Rules and Application)	Perspectival & Participatory (Wisdom and Alignment)
The Object of Focus	The Rule (The person is reduced to a case)	The Person (The rule serves as a guide)
The Ultimate Outcome	Condemnation and Weaponization	Restoration and Integration

Shattering the Narrow Frame



Step 1: Propositional Certainty
The rigid grip of procedural condemnation.



Step 2: Perspectival Intervention
Jesus turns the harsh spotlight back onto their own internal state, forcing a shift in perspective.

He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.



Step 3: Participatory Self-Examination
Justice requires integrity. Mercy requires self-examination. The stones must drop.

Subordination, Not Eradication

The Final Command

*“Neither do I condemn you;
go and sin no more.”*

Jesus does not reject the
left-hemisphere Law. Go and
sin no more is a strict
propositional rule.

The True Order

Wisdom occurs when
Left-Hemisphere precision
(Propositional/Procedural) is
enveloped and guided by
Right-Hemisphere compassion
(Perspectival/Participatory).

The Insight: Truth held together with compassion.
The Law is not destroyed; it is restored to its proper place.

The Light of Life

We see truth differently because our minds attend differently. Fear and control tighten our vision. Compassion widens it.

Do we approach life with a narrow, rigid frame that reduces people to problems? Or with a wise, compassionate attention that sees the whole person?

In Jesus, the Law becomes a path toward restoration—a way of seeing that brings us into deeper contact with truth, with others, and with God.