

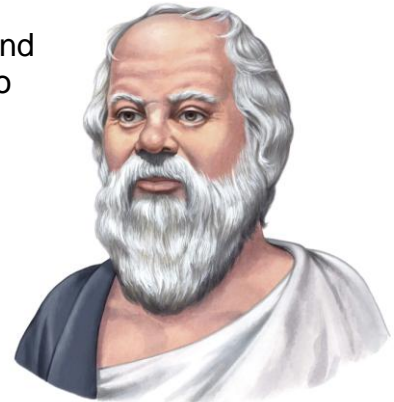
## An Encounter with Socrates

As an English major in college, my studies about Socrates, the classical Greek Athenian philosopher, were certainly part of the curriculum. Socrates lived, it is estimated, from 469 B.C. to 399 B.C., and he is credited with being one of the founders of Western philosophy.

The story is told of a young man coming to Socrates one day and saying, in substance: “Mr. Socrates, I have come 1,500 miles to gain wisdom and learning. I want learning so I came to you.”

Socrates said, “Come, follow me.”

He led the way down to the seashore. They waded out into the water until they were up to their waists. Socrates then seized his companion and forced his head under the water. In spite of his struggles, Socrates held him under.



Finally, when most of his resistance was gone, Socrates laid him out on the shore and returned to the marketplace. When the visitor had regained his strength, he returned to Socrates to learn the reason for this behavior.

Socrates said to him, “When you were under the water, what was the one thing you wanted more than anything else?”

“I wanted air,” the young man said.

Then Socrates replied, “When you want knowledge and understanding as badly as you wanted air, you won’t have to ask anyone to give it to you.”

I don’t know if any one of us would ascribe the need for learning to be as critical as air is to life, but the principle is understood. We ought to have a passion to learn more every day – about life, about our career, about God’s purpose for us, and about the role we play in serving others – from wherever and whomever we may find it.

Just remember: Life on this earth is short – whatever its length may be – and we should seek the best use of the time available to us.

– Beecher Hunter