

Walking in Wisdom
Ephesians 5:15-17
September 16, 2018
Pastor Gary Hollinger

God calls us to walk in His wisdom because it is infinitely greater than our own.

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the [temple] offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.” (Mark 12:41-44)

I. We are cautioned to walk with care. (15a)

Walking in the dark – 4 dangers:

- Step in – get dirty
- Trip on – cause injury
- Fall in – become trapped
- Eaten by – devil a lion

Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8b)

Circumspectly: careful to consider all circumstances and possible consequences: prudent

II. We are cautioned to be wise rather than fools. (v. 16)

Wise (Greek: Sophos): skilled or expert at living, able to form the best plans and use the best means for carrying them out.

2 components to wisdom:

- Knowledge – Understanding what is true and real
- Discernment – applying knowledge well, appropriately to the situation

Unwise = fools – asophos – without wisdom

The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” (Psalms 14:1)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise. (Psalms 111:10)

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding—indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. (Proverbs 2:1-10)

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. (James 1:5-6)

At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, “Ask for whatever you want me to give you.”

“Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?”

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” (1 Kings 3:5-14)

A wise man learns by the experience of others.

An ordinary man learns by his own experience.

A fool learns by nobody's experience. – author unknown

A truly wise man learns by God's Word.

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. (Colossians 2:2-4)

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written:

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.” Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:18-31)

III. We are cautioned not to waste our time. (v. 16)

“Proverbs 16:16 says, “To get wisdom is better than gold.” Why? Because gold can buy almost anything in this world. But it cannot buy everlasting life and joy.” –John Piper

If only we knew the power of your anger!

Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due.

Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. (Psalms 90:11-12)

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. (Colossians 4:5)

IV. We are cautioned to embrace God's ways. (v. 17)

Aphrone: mindless, stupid, ignorant, rash, or in a moral sense unbelieving. Even has the idea of being egotistic (thinking more highly of yourself than you ought)

I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart. (Psalms 40:8)

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God;

may your good Spirit lead me on level ground. (Psalms 143:10)

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great

endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:9-14)

“And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever. (1 Chronicles 28:9)

He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done. On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods. The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. (1 Kings 11:3-10)

So, wisdom always combines (1) *general knowledge of the facts* about reality with (2) the more specific and the *immediate discernment*, or insight, or intuition into the less perceptible, but crucial, dynamics of the situation, with (3) the *necessary resolve* to act on that knowledge and that insight. We won't act as wisely as we could, if we are ignorant of relevant reality, or if we are undiscerning of the immediate dynamics of the situation, or if we simply don't have the resolve to act, because we are lazy or afraid. – John Piper

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (John 14:26)

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:14)

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:7)

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13)

...there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. (Romans 3:11)

“Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem,
look around and consider, search through her squares.
If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth,
I will forgive this city. (Jeremiah 5:1)