

Wisdom—the Greatest Need!

Let's examine a few other principles of wisdom. I cite them merely as random examples.

Perhaps the greatest single need among God's leaders today is that of wisdom. It has been said that the greatest gift a parent can give their children is to be a wise and understanding parent. That is certainly true. Similarly, the greatest gift the ministry in God's Church can give to His sheep is to be wise and understanding *leaders*.

Wisdom overarches virtually every circumstance in which people—and leaders are people—can find themselves. It is probably more important to develop *this* quality within the leadership of God's Church than virtually any other aspect of character.

Daniel wrote that in the end time, "the wise shall understand." This refers to a whole variety of things. Among them would be the nature of the age—the confusion, division, criticism, disagreement and general competition for people and ideas within the splinters. The wise leader understands what is happening among God's sheep, and acts accordingly. The greatest gift that all of you can give to God's people is to be wise and understanding of the period immediately preceding Christ's Return.

James wrote, "If any of you lack wisdom, ask of God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jms. 1:5-8).

God gives wisdom. It is no more complicated than that. You cannot get it from any *man*, except as you might hear the words of wisdom coming from him. This would only occur because you were attuned to it in the way that the Proverbs instruct God's servants to be.

Many in God's Church today cannot get along in social settings of almost any kind. Also, they simply do not know how to solve their most basic problems through the application of wisdom. But difficulties in human relations may be the greatest single problem that God's Church faces in the final few years before Christ returns. Without sufficient leaders able to teach people—in a balanced, understanding and wise way—how to get along, we will never be able to overcome the greatest challenge The Church of God will face in years to come. If leaders are not developed, the Church will reach a point when it will struggle to grow larger. We will have insufficient leaders to even give rudimentary instruction to people who are trying to address their most basic problems. As the weak of the world, some will not be among "the wise that understand," even how to get along with other people. This means how to deal in a common sense way, led by God, with even fundamental situations that they will face.

Have you stopped to consider that you have free access, at any time you wish, to the wisest human being who ever walked the planet? Solomon, under God's inspiration, recorded for all time, what wisdom is—and how to get it. But you must actively read what he said. You must want to understand the greatest points of wisdom, and there are many, found in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and in many other parts of the Bible. You must set out to grasp the meaning and application of principles such as “To the counselors of peace is joy” (Prov. 12:20). Why do such counselors find joy? How does one do this? What things bring peace when this condition or atmosphere is lacking? Can *you* do this? Do you periodically determine to understand verses such as this one—and how to employ them?

The Bible states that “The scorner seeks wisdom and finds it not” (Prov. 14:6). How interesting! One can desire wisdom (and many do) but be unable to find it—because he scorns it when he comes in contact with it, when he has a chance to learn something that God would consider wise.

The Bible also states, “The discretion of a man defers his anger and it is his glory to pass over a transgression” (Prov. 19:11). Are you growing in discretion? Would you be considered a *discreet* or an *indiscreet* person? Are you practicing and working at being tactful—where your “speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man” (Col. 4:6)?

We all know that God “passes over” all of our sins at least once a year, if we have properly prepared for this occasion. This said, do you know when it is necessary to “pass over” a transgression—or when it is needful to come forward with a problem, occurring near you, because it is more important to get help than to pass over it?

Proverbs 2:11 states, “Discretion shall preserve you, understanding shall keep you.” This means that to wisely use discretion is much more vital than meets the eye. Certainly, if one does *not* do this with his anger, then he could get into big trouble—and may not be “preserved.” This same passage continues, explaining what discretion does: “To deliver you from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaks froward things” (vs. 12). Once again, much is at stake here in just this single passage, and it is another example of why gaining wisdom is so crucial to every leader.

Solomon wrote, “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels” (Prov. 1:5). Once again, does this describe you? Do you “hear” wisdom when her “voice [cries] in the streets” (Solomon added this in Prov. 1:20)? Proverbs 18:1 states, “Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeks and intermeddles with (Heb. “*snarls against*”) all wisdom.”

Now consider Proverbs 29:11; “A fool utters all his mind: but a wise man keeps it in till afterwards.” Knowing when to speak and when not to speak is another important

aspect of wisdom. Sometimes one *will* need to offer counsel, but not until getting the facts. “Afterwards,” he can better address the problems or issues he is confronting.

Next, Proverbs 12:18 states, “There is [he] that speaks like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health.” How true again. Most of God’s people are the weak of the world. They often “speak like the piercings of a sword.” They can so needlessly, carelessly and recklessly injure other people by using their tongue in this fashion. Wise leaders know never to do this! They seem to know *how* to fulfill Proverbs 10:32, “The lips of the righteous *know* what is acceptable.” They have learned to not speak in a way that pierces people.

Finally, consider this lengthy passage in James 3:13-18: “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, than peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

Study and meditate on extensive passages such as this. Does this one describe you? If not, are you growing to reflect the picture that it paints?

The psalmist wrote, “You through Your commandments have made me wiser than my enemies” (119:98). We *will* very much need to be wiser than our enemies. They will, in many cases, have a great deal of the kind of carnal wisdom that James warned of, which is “earthly, sensual and devilish.”

Obviously, many people do reflect this kind of carnal “wisdom,” which has *nothing* to do with the wisdom of God. We must be able to, as my uncle once advised me, “outthink your enemies.” As the foolish of the world, we could only rarely do this, and then probably more by accident. But with the wisdom of God, we will be able to face anything that could be thrown at us. This is because even the most foolish people, empowered by the greatest wisdom in the universe, vastly exceed the cunning and cleverness of this world. Remember, without God, we are badly overmatched when up against the worldly wise.

Challenge yourself to grow in the wisdom of God. The Bible instructs—commands, “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not... forsake her not, and she shall preserve you: love her and she shall keep you. Wisdom is the principle thing; therefore get wisdom” (Prov. 4:5-7). If you find that you lack the wisdom to generally keep yourself out of difficulty, God is telling you that you are deficient in this area.

Here are some final points for your consideration. Each is a wisdom-building activity:

1. Pray for wisdom (Jms. 1:5-7).
2. Listen to counsel (Prov. 12:15).
3. Exercise the wisdom you have already been given (Ecc. 7:11, 19-29).
4. Practice righteousness (Ecc. 2:26; Jms. 3:14-17).
5. Incline your ear to wisdom—be sensitive to it so you can hear it (Prov. 2:2, 6-7).
6. Having more faith means having more wisdom (Prov. 3:5-7; 28:26).
7. Seek wisdom anywhere and everywhere you can find it (Prov. 1:20, 23).

It has been said that knowledge is knowing *what* is right, understanding is knowing *why* it is right and wisdom is *doing it*. Therefore, actively PRACTICE these seven simple, basic points—and watch the gift of wisdom appear throughout your life!