**Wise Counsel**

*by Joe Price*

You have probably heard the one about the man who was going to represent himself in court – he had a fool for an attorney! The Bible teaches this principle when it says “the way of a fool is right in his own eyes” (Prov. 12:15). The person who is so consumed with himself that he could never possibly be wrong is a fool. He will not consider the possibility that his way might not be the best. And, if you try to change his mind he will gladly correct your “wrong” impression. Such a person is obstinate and rebellious against the will of God. Never mind that the God of the Universe has revealed His truth, this person is right because “he says so.” Truly, he is a fool.

The person who allows pride to dominate his heart is foolish. Pride opposes God and truth (1 Jn. 2:16). Pride is not the source of wisdom, but of shame, contention and destruction (Prov. 11:2; 13:10; 16:18).

However, the proverb also says “he who heeds counsel is wise”, while another one says “in the multitude of counselors there is safety” (Prov. 12:15; 24:6). The value of wise and godly counsel cannot be overestimated.

Whom we turn to for counsel makes all the difference in the world. People in the world give worldly counsel, while people of faith will turn us to the will of God (Psa. 1:1-2; 1 Cor. 15:33). We must seek out counselors who will help us follow God’s path of righteousness. Choose wise counselors, including the following:

*1) The word of God*(Psa. 119:97-100, 104, 130). By turning to God’s word for counsel we are going to the wisdom of the Wise One. The psalmist emphatically states that God’s word made him wiser than his enemies, his teachers and the aged. In contrast to man’s failure to understand the value of wisdom, Job declared that “God understands its way, and He knows its place” (Job 28:13, 23). There is no greater source of wise counsel than God’s word!

*2) Godly parents*(Prov. 1:8-9; 4:1-2). Some children think their parents do not know anything. But, since parents have already experienced much more of life than their children, the wise child listens to their counsel. To disregard the advice of your parents is the way of foolishness.

*3) A true friend*(Prov. 17:17; 27:6). This is one who, because of your close friendship, holds your best interests supreme. His or her advice may hurt you, but it will help you because it is “faithful.” It is wise to seek out friends who will give us advice that is for our spiritual good.

*4) People with experience* (2 Kgs. 12:4-13). A prideful Rehoboam rejected the wisdom of the old men for the counsel of youthful power. It led to civil war and the division of Israel. We should listen to those who have experienced things we now face; they can teach us important lessons (Titus 2:3-5).

Yes, pride keeps us from seeking wise, God-approved counsel. In contrast, the one who fears God hates pride and chooses advice and counsel that leads him or her in the paths of righteousness (Prov. 8:13). God favors the humble, but resists the proud (Jas. 4:6). Therefore, choose humble wisdom instead of arrogant foolishness. “*Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding”*(Prov. 9:9-10).

**Good Judgment**

*by Joe Price*

It has been said that good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from using bad judgment. There’s a good bit of truth to that. If only we would take time to learn the dangers of using bad judgment, perhaps we would avoid its painful and even tragic consequences. We should remember Jesus wants us to use good judgment, for He said to “judge righteous judgment” (Jn. 5:24).

We need good judgment in many areas of life. God’s word must be the pattern we follow in order to possess and use good (godly) judgment (Psa. 119:105). For instance, parents need to use good judgment regarding the education, safety and training of their children (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). When Christians enter the work force, they must use good judgment in several ways. Will this job help or hinder your spiritual service to God and to others to whom you have a responsibility? Will this job put you in situations of temptation? Will this job allow you the time you need to worship with the saints and attend to your spiritual obligations (1 Jn. 2:15-17; Heb. 10:25; Gal. 5:9-10)? Young people will need good judgment as they develop their relationships. Good judgment will be needed to choose friends and the types of people to date and eventually marry. Will your friends help you or keep you from obeying God? Will the boy or girl you date share your commitment to put Christ and His gospel first in his or her life? Will he or she help you stay morally pure? These are just some of the areas where we must shape our judgment by the word of God and not by the wisdom of the world (cf. Phil. 1:9-11; Jas. 3:13-18).

Experience can be an effective teacher to help us learn good judgment. I am certainly not recommending that we must experience the depths of sin in order to learn the difference between right and wrong.

We must trust what God tells us about the dangerous, deadly nature of sin (cf. Gen. 2:16-17). When we find ourselves in sin and evil circumstances because of our poor judgment, we should be wise enough to learn from our error, repent and change our lives for the better. The prodigal son learned from experience the advantages of living in his father’s house far exceeded the lure of riotous living. By “coming to himself” he drew upon his past experiences in his father’s house and upon his current condition to make drastic changes in his life (Lk. 15:11-21). Wouldn’t it have been better for that young man if he had figured that out before wishing he could eat the slop he was feeding the hogs? Lessons learned the hard way can help us return to God and improve our judgment.

We should learn from past experiences to put away sin from our lives (Col. 3:5-9). If you have not obeyed the gospel to become a Christian, we urge you to use good judgment and put on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). Become a Christian without delay. If you are a Christian who has squandered your blessings in Christ on things that led you away from God, use good judgment now. Obey the will of God, repent and return to Christ (Acts 2:37-38; 8:22; 1 Jn. 1:9). Avoid sin and the eternal death it brings (Eph. 5:16; 1 Pet. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:4-8).

By following the word of God, we all can develop and use righteous judgment, even if we have used bad judgment in the past (Matt. 11:28-30).