

Counsel

Discerning God's Will—part 5

July 2, 2017

DAY 1: The need for counsel; the dangers without counsel...

1. Is there anything that is more “natural” than the belief, “I know what to do.”?
2. How many times have you angrily asked, “Who are you to tell me what to do?”
3. Unfortunately, all of us can look back on bad decisions we've made. At the time of the decision we were “sure” we were right, and knew what to do.

4. The book of Proverbs warns us of this very conceit!

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Proverbs 12:15 The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.

5. Here is the danger of self-conceit.

Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.

Proverbs 26:12 Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

6. Here is the danger of self-deceit.

Jeremiah 17:9 For the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt. Who can understand it?

7. Which verse stands out to you the most? Why?

DAY 2: Four wrong responses to counsel:

1. Let's look at four wrong responses when making decisions:

a. The Mocker:

Proverbs 9:8 Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. ⁹ Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.

b. The Scorer:

Proverbs 13:13 He who scorns instruction will pay for it, but he who respects a command is rewarded. ¹⁴ The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life, turning a man from the snares of death.

c. The Ignorer:

Proverbs 13:18 He who ignores discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored.

Proverbs 10:17 He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.

d. The "Hater" (using this word, NOT in the current usage. This is not someone who just dislikes correction. He detests correction.

Proverbs 12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.

2. Which "character" strikes you the most? Why?

3. Is there one of these characters that you have played? What was the result?

DAY 3: 4 types of counsel

1. When seeking counsel on important decisions, it is not wise to just pick “anyone.” The temptation is to pick someone who you know will agree with what you want to do, anyway. That is NOT “counsel;” that is finding an “excuse.”

2. Proverbs instructs us to seek *many* counselors!

Proverbs 11:14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but many advisers make victory sure.

3. Let’s look at four different kinds of effective counsel. Under each type of counsel, list at least one person who would fit this area.

a. Godly counsel

“Godly” counsel is someone who attempts to see your decision from God’s point of view, and with Godly values in mind. He is willing to tell you what you may not want to hear!

Proverbs 13:20 He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.

b. Those in authority

God often uses those in authority to give us direction. This is not “iron-clad,” as someone in authority over us (parent, boss, pastor, teacher, police, etc.) may violate that authority.

Proverbs 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. ⁹ They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

c. Those who are “experts”

Look for people who have some expertise as to the area of your decision. Some people are experts in your field of interest.

1 Corinthians 12:21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

d. Those who know you well.

Proverbs 18:24 A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

4. When making big decisions, it is important to get lots of counsel!

DAY 4: Example of refusing to get godly counsel

Psalms 1:1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

1. When King Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. A question was asked of the king. "How heavy would the labor and taxes be? Would they be as heavy as when Solomon was king?"

2. Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served Solomon.

1 Kings 12:7 They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

*1 Kings 12:8 But Rehoboam **rejected** the **advice the elders** gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.⁹ He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell these people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter'--tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist.'¹¹ My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"*

3. The advice given by the two groups of counsel was vastly different. Which advice would young Rehoboam follow?

1 Kings 12:13 The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders,¹⁴ he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions."

4. This very foolish decision split the nation of Israel into the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom!

5. What reasons can you think of as to why Rehoboam chose the younger men's advice?

6. When you receive two opposing views of counsel, what factors do you use to decide what to do?

DAY 5: King Uzziah, the benefits of following counsel

1. Uzziah became king of Judah when he was sixteen years old. How could someone so young rule a nation?

2 Chronicles 26:4 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁵ He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.

2. King Uzziah began an era of great success.

2 Chronicles 26:6 He went to war against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod. He then rebuilt towns near Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines.

⁷ God helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabs who lived in Gur Baal and against the Meunites.

⁸ The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, because he had become very powerful.

⁹ Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate and at the angle of the wall, and he fortified them. ¹⁰ He also built towers in the desert and dug many cisterns, because he had much livestock in the foothills and in the plain. He had people working his fields and vineyards in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil.

¹¹ Uzziah had a well-trained army, ready to go out by divisions according to their numbers as mustered by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer under the direction of Hananiah, one of the royal officials. ¹³ Under their command was an army of 307,500 men trained for war, a powerful force to support the king against his enemies. ¹⁴ Uzziah provided shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows and slingstones for the entire army.

¹⁵ In Jerusalem he made machines designed by skillful men for use on the towers and on the corner defenses to shoot arrows and hurl large stones. His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful.

3. But just because you've started well doesn't mean you'll finish well. All of his success went to his head, and he paid a dear price for his pride:

2 Chronicles 26:16 But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷ Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. ¹⁸ They confronted him and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God."

¹⁹ Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD's temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead. ²⁰ When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the LORD had afflicted him.

²¹ King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house--leprosy, and excluded from the temple of the LORD. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

4. We never outgrow our need for counsel and wisdom!