

It Is Good To Ask For Advice

By Kent Heaton

“Without counsel, plans go awry, but in the multitude of counselors, they are established” (Prov. 15:22).

The book of Proverbs is a wonderful book of simple truths that if followed, will bring greater happiness in life. The proverbs are not deep religious discussions but bullets of common sense. The lost commodity of practical wisdom is found in the short, pithy sayings that speak volumes of interpersonal relationships, advice for the challenges of life and a complete relationship with God and man. We would do well to spend time combing the book of Proverbs for helping hints to improve our outlook in life. Seeking the counsel of others will give us greater understanding. Life is filled with making decisions. Trying to navigate the turbulent waters without the proper plans will not go well. The wise man suggests that to keep plans from failing, we should seek the counsel of those who can be trusted with practical wisdom. No man has all the answers to life. It is easy to believe we are right about everything but that is a failed assumption. Failure will always come to those who do not seek advice from others.

This proverb also suggests that we should make plans for life. We know the human experience is but a vapor but there should be a motivation to accomplish certain things in life. Making plans does not remove the reality there is no tomorrow. It determines a plan of wisdom in helping direct our lives to realize growth. We should never be satisfied with what we have done today as if there is nothing more to do. Spiritual growth continues to need planning and choosing the right path. Seeking the counsel of others helps to mold our decisions to make goals that can be accomplished. Asking advice will help further those goals to reality. The multitude of counselors will give a broader plane of wisdom to work from - guiding our decisions to a better end.

Seeking the counsel of others wards off the temptation of being rash. One of the problems of life is when we make hasty decisions without thinking the situation through. It is ‘in the moment’ we believe we know what is best and refuse to stop and seek a wiser head for guidance. Calamity follows. We say something that is regretted, act in a manner that is difficult to repair and all because we did not stop, think and listen to someone else. The ‘multitude of counselors’ would have warned us not to go down that path but we did not ask. We are all guilty. Sometimes we make unwise decisions that will last a lifetime. Regrets are made because we did not listen to the advice of others. Lessons learned the hard way are difficult to accept.

Rehoboam, son of Solomon, became king following his father’s death. He did not read the proverbs and heed their warnings. He sought after counsel but he chose the wrong kind of counsel beginning a long, spiraling death of the kingdom of Israel. In contrast, James writes in his epistle that older men and women should be teaching younger men and women. The implication also says that younger men and women should be seeking the counsel of older men and women. Listening to their advice will bring greater satisfaction in life than refusing counsel. Communication is a practical tool for wisdom. Without the counsel of others, plans will not work out for the best. Asking the advice of others will create a smoother path to journey in the uneven walks of life.

Do not be afraid to seek advice, asking guidance for the plans of life. Let the multitude of counselors be your best friends. Rash decisions will lead to trouble. Be patient in spirit. The word of God will be your foundation in seeking the counsel of the righteous. Surround your life with those who care for you and your journey to heaven. Listen, heed and guide the steps of your journey along the path of righteousness with those who walk before you. Imitate them as they imitate Christ.

Wanting to Impress

“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.” (Matt. 6:1) “All their works they do to be seen by men” (Matt. 23:5).

The story is told of a newly promoted colonel who moved into a makeshift office during the Gulf War. He was just getting unpacked when, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed a private with a toolbox coming his way. Wanting to seem important, he grabbed the phone: “Yes, General Schwarzkopf. Of course, I think that’s an excellent plan.” He continued: “You’ve got my support on it. Thanks for checking with me. Let’s touch base again soon, Norm. Goodbye.”

“And what can I do for you?” he asked the private.

The private mumbled, “Uhhh, I’m just here to hook up your phone.” (From Allan Smith) Wanting to impress others seems to be a natural tendency in all human beings. Nonetheless, let us be careful to heed the teaching of our Lord.

Sin Is Not a Disease

It is a large matter and too much to one side of the road to be discussed adequately here; but this is the real objection to that torrent of modern talk about treating crime as disease, about making a prison merely a hygienic environment like a hospital, of healing sin by slow scientific methods. The fallacy of the whole thing is that evil is a matter of active choice whereas disease is not. If you say that you are going to cure a profligate as you cure an asthmatic, my cheap and obvious answer is, “Produce the people who want to be asthmatics as many people want to be profligates.” A man may lie still and be cured of a malady. But he must not lie still if he wants to be cured of a sin; on the contrary, he must get up and jump about violently. The whole point indeed is perfectly expressed in the very word which we use for a man in hospital; “patient” is in the passive mood; “sinner” is in the active. If a man is to be saved from influenza, he must be a patient. But if he is to be saved from forging, he must be not a patient but an impatient. He must be personally impatient with forgery. All moral reform must start in the active not the passive will. (G.K. Chesterton in Orthodoxy, 1908)

Much Obliged, Lord, For My Vittles

Fulton Oursler tells of his old nurse, who was born a slave on the eastern shore of Maryland and who attended the birth of his mother as well as his own birth. She taught him the greatest lesson in giving thanks and finding contentment.

“I remember her as she sat at the kitchen table in our house; the hard, old, brown hands folded across her starched apron, the glistening eyes, and the husky old whispering voice, saying, ‘Much obliged, Lord, for my vittles.’

‘Anna,’ I asked, what’s a vittle?’

‘It’s what I’ve got to eat and drink, that vittles.’

‘But you’d get your vittles whether you thanked the Lord or not.’

‘Sure, but it makes everything taste better to be thankful.’”