**Being Wise About Wisdom**

Although people may choose to accept it, twist it, or reject it, the revealed wisdom of God is straightforward with its message of holiness, love, mercy, forgiveness, and godly living (ex: Ja 3:17). The wisdom of the world is generally straightforward with its carnality, hate, selfishness, and immorality (Ex: Ja 3:14-17)—though the world advertises those positively. But there is a third wisdom which has actually become far more controversial because it uses human experience to apply God’s wisdom.

God’s wisdom is primarily revealed information. Learning and understanding God’s wisdom is necessary but isn’t wisdom itself. Even accepting His revealed wisdom as truth does not mean one is wise. Wisdom involves learning, understanding, and accepting God’s wisdom, but to *be* wise, one must *apply* it. Specific application of God’s wisdom to daily living is not always spelled out in Scripture. This is where men and women with spiritual minds taught by God’s wisdom use what they see and learn about life to make actual life choice applications.

James tells us that “…the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy” (3:17); but he doesn’t tell us what that looks like in every situation we will face. Paul tells us that there are obvious acts of the flesh, but there are additionally “such things” that are not specified which the wise will identify and avoid. This is the “senses exercised” to which the Hebrews writer refers (He 5:14). It means knowing more Scriptures but also involves learning how to use and apply the Scriptures to “discern both good and evil” in daily, complex, and modern living.

Job said, “Wisdom is with aged men, and with length of days, understanding” (Jb 12:12). Ideally they will have had time to learn God’s revealed will and to use a wealth of human experience to perceive how to apply God’s wisdom to many aspects of life. This takes time. This takes observation. This takes learning from failures and successes (their own and those of others).

There is a strong temptation to argue with this kind of wisdom. It is an application of God’s wisdom, but not a direct quote of Scripture, so it can be easier to reject. This wisdom is sometimes deflected or even rejected by saying, “You say it’s unwise, but you can’t show Scripture that specifically says it is unwise or sin.” Admittedly, saying something is wise or unwise can be a lazy way to preserve traditions or resist re-examining convictions. But well-reasoned wisdom from those who are godly, mature, and spiritually minded needs to be carefully considered even though it may have been abused by others. “Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm” (Pr 13:20)

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