**PRINCIPLES FOR SEEKING COUNSEL**

Sunday School Lesson 13

*Bible Principles for Daily Living*

Proverbs 1:5

9/11/2022

**Introduction:** The Bible says much about seeking counsel. When Christians do not have an answer or are having trouble discerning what the answer should be, one of the greatest challenges is to get to the point in which we are humble and willing enough to seek proper counsel. We must not let pride get in the way of seeking Godly counsel. All of us will have some moments in our lives where we have to make a decision that we need counsel on. Oftentimes, a decision comes with great consequences, especially if we make the wrong decision. To be clear, answers are certainly available to us, but sometimes we have a hard time discerning exactly what to do. We need to be sure that we get the right kind of counsel. Thankfully, much of our counsel can and should come through our weekly Bible reading and hearing the Word of God taught and preached. A Christian who is faithfully attending a local church will probably not need a great amount of counsel outside of that given from the pulpit through. Yet, it is always better to err on the side of caution and get counsel that we may not need than to make a mistake that will be very costly in an important area of our lives. Additionally, getting Godly counsel that echoes the decision we were preparing to make can help to give us peace and confidence in the discernment that we have. Needless to say, counsel is very important for us. Let’s consider some principles that ought to govern our seeking of counsel.

1. **ALL COUNSEL MUST BE SOUGHT AND RECEIVED WITH AN UNDERSTANDING THAT THE LORD SHOULD BE OUR COUNSELLOR.**

* The Lord desires to be our Counsellor. Isaiah 9:6 tells us that His name shall be called Counsellor. He desires for us to seek advice from Him. We know that He wants to order our steps and direct our path. In Isaiah 30:1, the Lord warns the children of Israel about the counsel that they were seeking. He spoke a “woe” against them, and He proclaimed that they were rebellious children. They sought counsel but not the counsel of the Lord. When we seek counsel from others, we ought to seek it with the Lord’s leading in mind. If we keep this in mind, it will help us to seek counsel from the right sources. We know that the Lord’s counsel is the best. The Bible tells us that His counsel is wonderful (Isaiah 28:29). It shouldn’t be a hard thing for us to want to seek His counsel. As mentioned in our introduction, we have the Bible as our counsel (Psalm 119:24). If the Bible gives us the advice that we need to make a decision, there isn’t a need to seek any more counsel than that. The purpose of counsel is to give us an answer from the Lord through others when an answer from the Lord is not already clearly provided in His Word. The Lord guides us with His counsel (Psalm 73:24). Bless the Lord who has given us counsel (Ps. 16:7).

1. **ANY COUNSEL THAT GOES AGAINST THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD WILL ABSOLUTELY FAIL AND COME TO NOUGHT.**

* The Bible tells us that the counsel of the Lord shall stand (Proverbs 19:21). Unlike the counsel of men, we do not have to worry about the counsel of God coming up short or failing us. The counsel of the Lord is sure and steady. On the other hand, any counsel against the Lord has no chance at all to stand. Proverbs 21:30 tells us that there is no counsel against the Lord. If the Lord has given counsel, it is a very foolish thing to take any counsel that goes against His counsel. The counsel of men comes to nought every time (Acts 5:38; Isaiah 8:10). It has no chance of success. It has no chance to be right. Far too often, I have seen Christians who openly rejected the counsel of God in favor of the counsel of men. As a pastor, I’ve tried my best to warn any person who goes against the counsel of God. We have too many examples in Scripture that show us where men tried to go against the counsel of God. The enemies of Nehemiah are an example of this. They brought forward their own counsellors against Nehemiah and the work. All of their counsel was brought to nought (Nehemiah 4:15). It could not stand against what the Lord said would happen. All of the counsel of the heathen will come to nought (Psalm 33:10), but the counsel of the Lord stands forever (vs. 11). Let’s not be tempted to go against the counsel of the Lord.

1. **SEEKING GODLY COUNSEL SHOWS THAT YOU HAVE WISDOM, NOT A LACK OF IT.**

* For whatever reason, we think that seeking counsel from someone shows a lack of wisdom. The Bible shows us the opposite to be true (Proverbs 12:15). If we are unwilling to seek counsel, then it speaks to foolishness on our part. In our pride, we like to act like we have everything figured out. The truth is that no person has all of the answers except for our Heavenly Father. Proverbs 1:5 tells us that a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. Ultimately, we understand that everyone will get counsel from some source. If you are not willing to get counsel from God’s Word or from someone who might give you Godly counsel, then you are going to get counsel from an ungodly source or simply from yourself. The Bible warns about following our own counsel in Psalm 81:12. The way of a fool is right in his own eyes. The nation of Israel was guilty of walking after their own counsel. In Jeremiah 7:24, we find that they would not hearken unto the Lord. They instead chose to walk in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart. Be wise and seek counsel, and your wisdom will increase (Prov. 19:20).

1. **A MULTITUDE OF COUNSELLORS IS ONLY AS HELPFUL AS THE COUNSEL GIVEN AND THE MOTIVES OF THE PERSON SEEKING IT.**

* We probably all know the verse that speaks about there being safety in the multitude of counsellors – Proverbs 24:6; 11:14. We also have Proverbs 15:22 that tells us that purposes are established in the multitude of counsellors. Clearly, it can be profitable to have more than one counsellor among men in our lives. Yet, we must consider these passages in light of what the entire Word of God reveals to us in this matter. We can find several examples where a multitude of counsellors did not result in safety. Rehoboam had a multitude of counsellors, but he ended up dividing the nation of Israel (1Kings 12). In that same chapter, Jeroboam had counsellors who encouraged him to establish golden images in Israel. Absalom did not have safety in having two counsellors instead of one. Isaiah 47:13 tells us that Israel had become wearied by the multitude of counsellors that they had. What is the key to our understanding this? The thought is that multiple counsellors can reveal knowledge to us that we might not have considered from another counsellor. Yet, too much counsel can cause confusion and uncertainty. The key is to seek Godly counsel only and to do it with the purpose of getting direction – not what you want! Too many people seek a multitude of counsellors for purpose of finding the one that agrees with them.

1. **IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DISCERN BETWEEN GODLY AND UNGODLY COUNSEL.**

* We are told in Psalm 1:1 that blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. It would be really easy for us to justify getting bad counsel by declaring that we just didn’t know that we were getting counsel from a bad source. Yet, the Bible shows us clearly that it is our responsibility to walk not in the counsel of the ungodly. We are to be able to discern between good and bad counsel. In Psalm 106:43, we see that we can provoke God by the counsel that we seek out. I believe that Proverbs 20:5 helps us to understand our responsibility in this matter. It shows us that a man of understanding is able to take counsel and draw it out like deep water. This means that if we are given ungodly counsel from a source that we thought was Godly, then we should be able to have the understanding to reject the counsel.

The counsel of the wicked should be easy to see because it is far from the Lord (Job 21:16; 22:18).

1. **IT IS BETTER TO WAIT FOR GODLY COUNSEL THAN TO MAKE A HASTY DECISION.**

* When describing the children of Israel in the wilderness, the Lord tells us that they would not wait for His counsel (Psalm 106:13). We see this behavior from them throughout their time in the wilderness. They often did not wait to hear the Lord’s counsel from Moses. They were quick to make up their minds and to be moved to fear. Sometimes, we allow our impatience to put us in a bad position. We think that we cannot afford to wait for the Lord to give us counsel, but we know that we cannot afford not to wait. When we don’t take the counsel of the Lord, we set ourselves up for hurt (Luke 7:30; Psalm 5:10). King Saul is a great example of this. He could not wait for Samuel to arrive. He had to make a decision. He probably thought that he was doing the right thing. Yet, we know that this did not work out well for Saul. As we seek counsel, let us have the faith to wait on the Lord to give it. Let’s not rush and make a foolish decision or allow ungodly counsel to step in and take the place of Godly counsel.