

JULY 1, 1990

THE PRIORITY OF WISDOM.

Some times it seems as if there is not enough time to get everything done that we need to do. Nearly always it seems that there is not enough money to buy the things that we need. Our success in dealing with both these situations is a matter of setting priorities. We are not going to make more time, therefore, we must use what we have to the best advantage. Most of us are not going to have a lot more money than we now have, so we must use what we have there also to the best advantage. If we make the right choices, then we are said to be wise in the use of our time and money. If we make the wrong choices, then we seem to be foolish in such matters. We spend a lot of effort trying to create more time by hiring people to do what we need to have done or by using machines that get the job done faster. We also spend a lot of effort to obtain more money by getting training to get a better job or by switching jobs that offers better pay. I believe that we would make more of an impact on the outcome if we invested in obtaining additional wisdom as to how to use the time and material things that we have. I see people who seem to make a lot of money and have a lot of time on their hands and they use both in foolish ways so that not even they benefit from the time and material things except for the moment. If all we do is but for the moment, then life really is futile; however, if there is an eternity (and there is) then all of life itself should be directed to wisely investing in that future. Those that live for the moment claim that they are seeking happiness and yet they never find it, while those that live with their eye on heaven while their feet are on the ground find happiness and blessedness as a by-product.

Every person, young or old, rich or poor, has the same basic need for wisdom. Wisdom is the gift that you give to the person who has nothing. It is also the gift that you give to the person who has everything. It is certainly the gift every parent must pass on to their children.

¹Hear, *O* sons, the instruction of a father, And give attention that you may gain understanding, ²For I give you sound teaching; Do not abandon my instruction. Proverbs 4:1-2 (NASB95)

Modern day industrial society makes it difficult for parents to give adequate attention to raising their children so that the child is well adjusted and disciplined. Most fathers and now-a-days even the mothers are not at home to provide the conveyance of knowledge and instruction in wisdom and discipline that children need. The kids get whatever instruction that can at "Day Care", Sesame Street, Mr. Rogers, or from the older kids that live on the next streets, day time Soap Operas, or whoever. It is not all bad, the parents do have some time during the evenings and on weekends to spend with their children and some parents do a super job in rearing their children under such circumstance. Most parents do not. It take time and energy and a very, very dedicated commitment to the process of growing lives of our children for it to work as it should. Most kids think that their parents do not know a whole lot. If the majority of what they were learning was coming from the parent rather than the television, then they might have greater respect for their parents. There is an implied responsibility for the parent to model what he teaches. If discipline is the message, then discipline should be modeled. If understand of life is the message, then the parents may have to learn it first before they can teach it. If it is the responsibility of the parent to give GOOD doctrine, then the parent must first know what is good. Good teaching, properly done, will be listened to by children and they will follow it in most cases.

³When I was a son to my father, Tender and the only son in the sight of my mother, ⁴Then he taught me and said to me, "Let your heart hold fast my words; Keep my commandments and live; ⁵Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶"Do not forsake her, and she will guard you; Love her, and she will watch over you. Proverbs 4:3-6 (NASB95)

We are so enamored by "what's new and different" that we sometimes overlook what has worked for centuries. It has always amazed me when someone comes out with a discovery of some "brand-new truth" that if the idea is really any good that the truth of the matter has been there all along in the Word of God. What happens is that people adopt some manmade philosophy and it sounds good until it is tried and when it actually fails, then, hopefully, the real truth is rediscovered. Wouldn't it be great if we could hold on to the truth and pass it along to

our children so that we did not sentence them to learn the lessons of life the hard way. One of the most effective ways of teaching young people is get them to see that they will need to learn the lessons of life so that they can teach their children. Most people will respond to responsibility. Truths should be passed on from one generation to the next and the younger we start with children, the better it is. Parents ought to spend a lot of time with their children in the young and formative years. This is the time to teach wisdom, a sense of responsibility, respect for God, respect for parents, a love of learning.

⁷“The beginning of wisdom *is*: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding. ⁸“Prize her, and she will exalt you; She will honor you if you embrace her. ⁹“She will place on your head a garland of grace; She will present you with a crown of beauty.” Proverbs 4:7-9 (NASB95)

To the Hebrew mind, wisdom and understanding were embodied in the moral teachings of the Word of God. When we start to see that the teachings that are in the Bible are really the best way to operate our lives, then we start to acquire wisdom. It will be recognized by others that you have wisdom and you will be a person that is sought for advice. We have the truth of all the ages within our grasp and so often fail to make good use of it. When we do use it, then wisdom will grace our lives.

¹⁰Hear, my son, and accept my sayings And the years of your life will be many. ¹¹I have directed you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in upright paths. ¹²When you walk, your steps will not be impeded; And if you run, you will not stumble. ¹³Take hold of instruction; do not let go. Guard her, for she is your life. Proverbs 4:10-13 (NASB95)

There are other rewards of living a life that is based on wise choices. In a society where foolish action can get you killed, then wisdom truly does add years to your life. So many of the young people in our nation are involved in drugs and gangs and so many other foolish things and they pay for it with their very lives. So many times, failure to make the right choice can limit our options later on in life. Many politicians have had foolish choices come back to haunt them in their political lives. When wisdom is abandoned then we will find many stumbling blocks that show up in our lives. The way to avoid those kinds of problems is grab hold of the instruction (discipline) that can lead to wisdom. The words used here is to "take fast hold" which implies to stick to the discipline of gaining wisdom and understand like glue. It is so easy to let the discipline that we know we need slip away.

We really don't have a lot of excuses for not operating wisely, our parents have told us what worked for them and their parents, and deep down inside, we already know what is wise and what is not. We must choose how it will be with us as to what priority Wisdom will have in our lives.