

Walking In Wisdom Series: 4

Wisdom Gives Attention to the Word

Last time we noted that wisdom flowed out of having a personal relationship with God and being obedient to His commandments. We finished the session by reading some verses in James 1, Matthew 7 and Joshua 1. Let us remind ourselves of these verses:

Joshua 1.8

God spoke to Joshua and told Him not to deviate from the word of God – this would make him successful.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” Joshua 1.8

good success – to be prudent, circumspect, wise and prosperous

“the book of this law doth not depart out of thy mouth, and thou hast meditated in it by day and by night, so that thou dost observe to do according to all that is written in it, for then thou dost cause thy way to prosper, and then thou dost act wisely” (Young's Literal Translation 1898)

“And the book of this law shall not depart out of thy mouth, and thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest know how to do all the things that are written in it; then shalt thou prosper, and make thy ways prosperous, and then shalt thou be wise.” (Brenton's English Septuagint)

In Brenton's English translation we read the words '*that thou mayest know how to do all the things*' – that's wisdom. Knowing what to do is one thing but knowing how to do it is something completely different.

This was one of the ways that Moses was set apart from the congregation of Israel – the Bible records in Psalm 103.7

“He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.”

- The children of Israel saw the mighty acts and miracles that were performed. They knew God as their provider and supplier – but for the most of them that's all He was. They didn't know Him and enjoy that fellowship with Him, one of the main reasons they kept yearning for Egypt.
- But Moses, he knew the ways of God. He had a relationship with God, he fellow-shipped with God, through which God gave him wisdom to lead His people. This is the know-how.
- The word 'ways' literally means 'a road or path, course, journey, direction and manner' figuratively it can be interpreted as the course of life or mode of action.

In Joshua we read also that these 'ways' or know-how come from keeping continually in the word – keeping it before their eyes and meditating on it without deviation. This in turn will make one wise or to act wisely.

In the New Testament we read that a refusal to hear and act on the word is described as foolishness

James 1.22-25

- Be a doer of the word not just a hearer. Put into practice what you have heard.
- If you don't put into practice what you have heard you are being deceived by yourself.
 - anyone can be fooled and deceived but only a fool deceives themselves.
- Doing and continuing in what you have heard produces blessing – the required result. This is the way of wisdom.

Matthew 7.24-27

- Again in this parable Jesus taught that a man with wisdom doesn't just hear the word of God but is a doer of the word. He puts it into practice. The way he judges and acts on the word is like building a house on a firm foundation.
- Foolishness does the opposite – it doesn't act on the Word. It does whatever it pleases or whatever sounds good.

Let us turn again to the Proverbs – because here we see exactly the same instruction.

Proverbs 4.20-27

This passage is one of my favourites. Solomon begins by saying “[give attention to my words, incline your ear to my sayings](#)” (vs20)

What is he trying to say here? - twice in this verse he says similar things as if to underline and emphasise the importance of the theme.

- Attend – listen, hear, pay attention, take note and mark well. A good definition of this word is 'to prick up the ears'.
- Incline – stretch, spread, turn and bend towards .

God's word needs our undivided attention – no distractions. We need to be hearing what is said.

(vs21) “[Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart](#)”
These are exactly the same thoughts that we read from Joshua

(vs22) “[For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh](#)”
Acting on the word of God produces life and healing for the body and soul.

(vs23) “[Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life](#)”
Guard and keep your heart. Set a sentry at the door of your heart. It is from the heart that all the issues, thoughts and actions of life flow. Matthew 12.34-37
Psalm 119.11 “[Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You](#)”

(vs24) “[Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you](#)”
We have just read in Matthew that men will give an account of every idle word they speak. Idle is something that is unproductive, it is perverse.

(vs25-27) “[Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. \(26\) Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. \(27\) Do not turn to the right or to the left; remove your foot from evil](#)”

Another reminder that we should deviate from the Word of God – we are not to turn to the left or the right but stay focused.

(vs26) “[Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established](#)”

We are to meditate in the word so that our ways are established. This is the same word as we saw in Psalm 103. God's word will chart our course of life or mode of action.

No wonder the wise king could say “My son, give attention to my words, incline your ear to my sayings” - This is the beginning of wisdom, fearing God and attending to His Word.

Proverbs 3.1-8