

The Greatest Advice in the World

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Text: Proverbs 3:1-6

Introduction:

Giving advice seems to be people's greatest pastime. The only problem, all advice is not great. Have you ever got in trouble because you took some bad advice? I have and it sure wasn't a pleasant experience. People usually give advice, in reference to something they have experienced or how they feel. But when we give advice it should be something that is aligned with the word of God.

Here in these verses, we find that Solomon is giving advice to his son. He tells him to never forget his law but keep them in your heart. He tells him that they will produce long life and peace. He encourages him to always be merciful and truthful and again hide them in his heart. This he said will help you find high esteem in the sight of God and man.

Sometimes you have to be careful where you get your advice.

g While sorting through "treasured" stuff her daughter, Elizabeth, had accumulated over the years, a mother came across a questionnaire Elizabeth had filled out while completing her master's degree. In response to the question "What was the most important advice you received from your mother?" Elizabeth had written, "Always rely on your own good judgment." And to "What was the most important advice you received from your father?" Elizabeth answered, "Ask your mother."

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Even our parents can give us bad advice. But when people give us advice about trusting God and living for God we should listen. Parenting can be hard when coming to advice. But if we base our advice upon the attributes of God then we can be sure it will be sound advice.

g A gentleman had two children: one a daughter, who was considered plain in her outward appearance; the other a son, who was considered handsome. One day, as they were playing together, they saw their faces in a looking-glass. The boy was charmed with his beauty, and spoke of it to his sister, who considered his remarks as so many reflections on her lack of it. She told her father of the affair, complaining of her brother's rudeness to her. The father, instead of appearing angry, took them both on his knees, and with much affection gave them the following advice: "I would have you both look in the glass every day: you, my son, that you may be reminded never to dishonor the beauty of your face by the deformity of your actions: and you, my daughter, that you may take care to hide the defect of beauty in your outward appearance by the superior lustre of your virtuous and amiable conduct."

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Notice the life giving "truths" that Solomon shares with his son.

I. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

- A. Trust must be complete for there to be peace. Either you trust or you don't. When riding a roller coaster, you must believe that it is safe and that the engineers who built it and inspected it knew what they were doing or you wouldn't get on it.
- B. Half hearted trust is the worst kind. It is a disease that eats away at one's faith till trust is removed and fear and dread remain. Perfect peace casts out all fear.
- C. Trusting God is the most important advice one can get. But we must remember that half-heartedness is kin to lukewarmness. God will not accept it.

James said in 1:6-8- *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

g James in his customary forthright way tells us to "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness" (James 1:2, 3). In case we are inclined to modify these words as the utopian command of one who had not really experienced sorrow, let us remember that James was one of the principal leaders of the Christians in Jerusalem who continually faced persecution from those outside the Church (culminating in his own martyrdom in his sixties), as well as internal dissension associated with a Judaizing element. James surely knew what it meant to "meet various trials!"

But James had also learned that difficulties can produce steadfastness or patience, though the natural reaction is annoyance or bitterness. He never tells us to pretend that a trial is nonexistent. Instead he wants us to recognize and rejoice that any problem can be the occasion for God to work in and through us in a way that He otherwise would not.

This is indeed a "testing of our faith"; it calls upon us to believe in the goodness of God, and to trust that He is not only willing but able to accomplish His purposes, no matter what befalls us. Any difficulty, whether great or small, is an occasion for joy, but only when we remind ourselves of the nature of the God who loves us and wills only the best for us.

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II. Seek understanding from God.

- A. God has all wisdom. We are not to lean upon our own wisdom or understanding. God must be the final authority or we can only become as big as ourselves.
- B. Mankind has leaned upon itself and become failures throughout the centuries. The reason is that mankind keeps forgetting or will not accept that it is a creation and not an evolution.
- C. Lean upon the Lord. Man believes in nature, but God alters and controls nature. Man trusts in what he can see but God deals in the unseen. We all need someone to lean on.

We need someone who understands like Jesus.

g A young mechanic became involved in some trouble with his employer on the question of money that was due him. A friend reasoned with him, upon learning the name of the lawyer to whom he had gone for consultation. "Why, I could direct you to a score of better lawyers," said his friend. "That man is only a commonplace fellow."

"That may be true," replied the mechanic, "but he understands my case as no one else would be able to understand it. He used to work at my trade himself."

Jesus Christ attracts the man who is in need of help, because he knows all about human sorrows. He was once in the place of the sorrowing one himself.

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III. Acknowledge God in all your ways.

- A. Carry everything to God in prayer; talk to Him about everything. I heard a man once say that we should only bother God with big problems and that we should handle the small ones. Well, I found out that if you didn't take the small ones to God they soon became big ones.
- B. By acknowledging God, you are putting Him in control. Once you put it in God's hand you can rest assured that He will begin to work things out for your good.

g Some years ago, a young graduate reported to a law office for training or apprenticeship. The senior lawyer who hired him quickly indoctrinated him in the office routine. Then the young lawyer sat at his desk and carried on this conversation with himself.

"What are you going to do when you finish your apprenticeship?"

"Hang out my shingle and practice law, of course!"

"What then?"

"Why, make a lot of money!"

"What then?"

"When I get rich I shall retire."

"What then?"

"Well, I will die."

"What then?"

His whole body trembling, Charles G. Finney rushed out of the office and ran to a park some few hundred yards distant. He remained there in prayer, vowing that he would not return to his office or to his room until he had settled his life's work. He saw himself as he was--selfish, ambitious, sinful. And he gave himself to the Lord for Him to use. Leaving the park, Finney stepped forth, in faith in God, to a life of usefulness rarely paralleled in the last two centuries.

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- C. When we acknowledge God we are saying: you are creator and I am the creation, you are wisdom and I am without understanding, you are able and I am unable, you are God and I am in want.

Conclusion:

Throughout the advice Solomon gave to his son there is the word peace which is produced. Trusting God produces peace when it is whole-hearted. Leaning upon God produces peace because you know somebody bigger than you and I is in control. Acknowledging God is taking action and it produces peace through God's word and promises.

We are constantly giving advice let us make sure that it is from God. And when that advice comes to you from God accept it. Don't be stubborn and lazy and unconcerned. Many times it seems as if the church has a "zoo mentality".

g Some church members are as stubborn as a Missouri mule about doing church work, but as sly as a fox in their own business deals; as busy as a bee in spreading the latest gossip, but as quiet as a mouse in spreading the gospel of Christ. Many are as blind as a bat to see the needs of others, but have eyes of a hawk to see the faults of a few. Some are as eager as a beaver about a barbecue, but as lazy as a dog about the prayer meetings. Some will roar like a lion when things do not go just to suit them, but they are as gentle as a lamb when they need the preacher of the church. Some are as noisy as a blue jay when calling on the church for advice, but as timid as a kitten about talking to the lost and as slow as a snail about visiting absentees and shut-ins. Many are night owls on Saturday nights, but "bed bugs" Sunday mornings and as scarce as hen's teeth on Wednesday nights.
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These “truths” that Solomon gave to his son are still relevant today. God is still God and He is still able to handle your problems. So trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not unto your own understanding. Call upon the Lord today and He will direct your path.

References

May, Steve (1999) 1001 Contemporary Illustrations. Raleigh, North Carolina: Heaven Word Inc.