

Seeking Godly Counsel Parts 1 through 4

Elder Ronnie Loudermilk

SEEKING GODLY COUNSEL (part 1)

Proverbs 11:14, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

While living in this world, the children of God face challenges on a daily basis. Often, when faced with decisions, we are not sure which way to go. Sure, there are many decisions that are clear cut, easy decisions to make. But more times than not, the decisions we have before us are clouded by sin and the influence of the world. Solomon, in the verse of scripture previously cited, desires the reader to seek help from others. We, because of: (a) pride, (b) fear that others will not care or (c) even a lack of faith if we can find help, will usually be reluctant to ask. But according to this verse, safety is found in the multitude of godly counsellors. And you may be asking, 'Where can I find godly counsel for my life?' Without question, the best source for godly counsel is the Word of God. God's Word will never lead you in the wrong path of life.

Another good source is those that walk and commune with the Lord. Proverbs 13:20 reads "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." I have been blessed in my life to have godly parents, godly friends and several wise fathers in the ministry. These wise individuals have given me information and guidance that has saved me from many dangers and troubles.

When searching the scriptures, we find many who were willing to look to others for help and guidance in times of trouble. A few examples are:

(1) In Genesis chapter 41 when the Pharaoh of Egypt called for the help of Joseph. In Genesis 41:38 Pharaoh asked, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" The man he called upon for guidance and help in the days to come was Joseph.

(2) In 2 Kings 5:9 it was Naaman, the captain of the host of Syria, that came to Elisha the man of God for help with his dreaded disease of leprosy. Elisha's counsel was not what Naaman expected, but according to 2 Kings 5:14 it worked.

(3) In Daniel 5:13 it was Belshazzar, the King of Babylon, who called for Daniel to interpret the handwriting on the wall. Daniel's reputation for wisdom and discretion was remembered when others had no answers. Daniel, "a man greatly beloved" (Dan 10:11), was blessed with the wisdom of God to interpret the words the "fingers of a man's hand" had written.

(4) In Acts 2:37 after hearing the Spirit filled preaching of the Apostle Peter, the congregation, who were convicted in their hearts, asked the Apostles for counsel saying "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

(5) In Acts 15:2, it was the Apostle Paul and Barnabas who went to Jerusalem to the Apostles for counsel concerning the false doctrine that had slipped into the Church of Antioch.

(6) In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, it was the Apostle Paul who gave counsel to the members of the Church at Corinth concerning their questions about marriage. In 1 Corinthians 7:1, Paul makes it clear that this chapter is a response to "the things where-of ye wrote unto me;..."

(7) And in Paul's letter to the Colossians, it is clear that men like Epaphras and Onesimus had made

a 1000-1300 mile journey to Rome, where Paul was in prison, seeking counsel concerning the issues the disciples faced in Colosse.

Brethren and sisters, the examples of scripture are clear. Many times throughout history, the children of God were blessed to receive good godly counsel concerning the troubles and issues of life. Are we willing to seek for godly counsel, or will we fall into the pit of self sufficiency? Let us not be afraid to measure our conclusions with others, who have been blessed with wisdom. And most all, let us compare all things to the Word of the Lord, which is always right.

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SEEKING GODLY COUNSEL (part 2)

BEWARE OF FOOLISH AND UNGODLY COUNSEL

Proverbs 11:14, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

One of the strongest proofs of Divine authorship of scripture (2 Tim 3:16) is that the Bible not only records the obedience of the children of God, but also their disobedience and failures. If a carnal man was the author of the Bible, I doubt seriously that he would record his own faults and failures. And you may ask yourself, 'Why are those times recorded also?' Even though there are many answers to that question, two that appear simple are (1) For us to know that the people in the Bible (except for Jesus Christ our Lord) were sinners like you and I, and (2) that we could learn life lessons from the account of their ups and downs in life. When we consider the dangers of foolish and ungodly counsel we find many examples in the Old and New Testament when sinners who, being born again children of God, were influenced by the wiles of the foolish and ungodly. Such examples include:

(1) In 1 Kings chapter 12 in the life of Rehoboam, King of Israel. After the death of Solomon, the people of Israel were extremely divided and unsettled. When the people approached Rehoboam in 2 Kings 12:3-4, the King took counsel from two different groups. The one group was said to be "young men that were grown up with him, and stood before him:" (2 Kings 12:8). By the language of the text, we are able to conclude that these individuals had been Rehoboam's peers and contemporaries for quite a while. Rehoboam did not have to form a search party to find them. Without question, we can see that their opinions were constantly nearby. Likewise, we in the year 2015, face the same challenges. Foolish and ungodly counsel is always near and very easy to find. We will not have to search for it, because more times than not, it will usually find you.

(2) In 2 Chronicles 24 during the life and reign of King Joash. Joash, who began his reign in Jerusalem at 7 years old, was saved from death and cared for by Jehoiada the priest. Jehoiada was a great counsellor to Joash, but in 2 Chronicles 24:15, he died. After the death of this great counsellor to Joash the King, the princes of Judah came to King Joash and convinced him to hearken unto them. In 2 Chronicles 24:21 we find King Joash, following the counsel of these men ("they conspired") giving the command to kill the grandson of the man that had helped him so much in his early life. These men, who had been near Joash for years, finally found an opening in the King's life to give their counsel. And so it is in the lives of children of God today. Foolish and ungodly

counsel is always seeking an open door, an opportunity, to press in and convince the child of God of their ways.

(3) In Daniel chapter 6 when the presidents and princes in the Median-Persian Empire came to Darius to convince him of a law that would condemn Daniel because of his devotion to God. When these beguilers came to Darius, they used the King's own carnal nature to convince him of their ideas. In Daniel 6:7 we read, "that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king..." Their efforts were made while appealing to the flesh, and so it is with all foolish and ungodly counsel, IT WILL APPEAL TO THE CARNAL NATURE. In every case, when you find a person falling victim to foolish counsel; the carnal nature, not the spiritual, is dominating the scene.

(4) In 2 Samuel chapter 13 when Jonadab counsels Amnon concerning Tamar, Amnon's half sister. Amnon, who was already filled with concupiscence (an animal like lust without boundaries or parameters), was counseled by his subtle friend and first cousin (Jonadab), who persuaded Amnon of a way to act out the sin that was in his heart. The very name Jonadab means to be free and spontaneous, and that is exactly what he convinced Amnon to be. In my mind I can hear Jonadab saying, 'Just do it, you only live once!' And in following Jonadab's counsel, Amnon found himself falling into the corruption of sin that existed in his mind. Every time I read this chapter in God's Holy Word, I think about the multitudes of children of God who are pressed and persuaded by the foolish and ungodly advice of sinners to go in the paths of wickedness. So often people as Jonadab's name implies, just live for the moment only to find that later in life, there are long term consequences for sin.

(5) In 2 Timothy chapter 2 when the teaching of Hymanaeus and Philetus overthrew the faith of some. Paul said in verse 17 that "their word will eat as doth a canker:..." In this lesson, we see how that foolish and ungodly teaching and counsel will eat away at your life.

Brothers and sisters, the message is clear. Foolish and ungodly counsel is always near; seeks an opportunity in your life; appeals to the carnal nature; is pressing and persuasive; and will gradually eat away at your life as a canker sore. Are those enough warnings to cause us to beware? Or, will we go through life ignorantly, giving in to the temptations of it? For us to please God, it will require us to overcome. I pray that God will give us daily grace to not only overcome, but also help our brothers and sisters in this world to overcome the foolish, ungodly counsel and influence that exists in this sinful world. Amen!

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SEEKING GODLY COUNSEL (part 3)

Testing the Counsel we Receive

Proverbs 11:14, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

The world in which we live is one that is filled with right and wrong and truth and lies. Since we, the children of God, do not have a direct AT&T phone line into heaven, sometimes it is difficult to know what to do. In those times when we see a cluttered path in front of us, it is important to take the

counsel of the Apostle Paul who said, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess 5:21).

In John's first Epistle to the disciples of Christ, we find the Apostle instructing the children of God and equipping them to face the challenges of the day. John knew the disciples would be confronted with false doctrines and teachings that could stir up the carnal mind. John's exhortation to those students, as well as to us today, was "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: (1 John 4:1). And you may be asking, 'Brother Ronnie, I believe Paul when he said to prove things and John when he said to try. But what is the measuring tool?' We have at least three ways to test (prove and try) all counsel to know truth from error; good from evil; and right from wrong.

However, one of the three is greater and more consistent. Those three are;

(1) The Word of God. The Bible is our plumb line and measuring tool that has been given to us from heaven above. In 2 Timothy 3:16 the Apostle Paul confirms that "scripture is given by inspiration of God", meaning that God is the Author of the Bible and not man. And since scripture came from the Lord it is always "profitable", and it always will be a help and benefit when we consult with it. The Bible is always profitable "for doctrine" (teaches what's right), "for reproof" (teaches what's wrong), "for correction" (teaches how to get right when we are wrong), "for instruction in righteousness" (how to stay right when you are right). With that said, it should be the conclusion of every reader that if you receive counsel that's not in line with scripture, DON'T DO IT. No matter who says it's right, if the Bible says it's wrong, stay away from such activity and conduct.

(2) The counsel of those that walk close to the Lord. In Proverbs 13:20 we read, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but the companion of fools shall be destroyed." In this world, there is a few, according to Matthew 7:14, which walk in the strait and narrow way of life. These people are able to give Godly counsel. The best and easiest way to recognize that person is when they are willing to measure their advice by the Holy Word of God. If you desire to have a greater level of wisdom it might do you well to seek out and find such individuals and fellowship with them on a regular basis. A very good place to start looking for this type of person is at the House of God. The men and women who read the Bible and listen to the Gospel on a regular basis are people who are equipped to give good counsel to those in need. I personally feel that I've benefitted greatly from the counsel and godly example that I've received being a member of the Lord's Church, and so will you.

(3) Our own conscience. In the Gospel of John 8:9 we find a woman who was brought to the Lord, caught in the very act of adultery. The people who brought this woman were ready and prepared to condemn her and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord, upon hearing them, "stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not." When Jesus stood, He said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." When the mob heard those words, they were "convicted by their own conscience" and "went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last:..." This group, who really had the condemnation of Jesus in mind, was told by their own conscience that this was not a good place to be. I can just hear their thoughts, 'This is not turning out the way we thought and planned, let's get out of here'. Simply put, there are times when our conscience can save us from a lot of trouble.

If you will recall, I said in the beginning of this effort there was one greater and more consistent than the other two. The truth is, sometimes even the most dedicated disciple can miss the mark. Since we all have a nature of sin, it is easy for us to think with a carnal mind. And since we have that nature of sin, it's easy for our conscience to lead us wrong also. But there is one which is never wrong, it is the HOLY WORD OF GOD. When you receive counsel, or feel in your conscience something is right or

wrong, test it by the Bible.

Brothers and sisters, we are living in a time when trained medical physicians, government officials, and even those claiming to be religious, are giving poor counsel. There are many who can, with great swelling words, convince a person of their ways. They affirm that the murder of the unborn and same gender marriage is just and right. Therefore they all seem to feel in their conscience that they are justified in such actions. But the Word of God says different! The Word of God teaches us that murder is wrong (sinful), and scriptural marriage is between a man and a woman. If you are faced with difficult decisions, seek Godly counsel, listen to your conscience, but in all things, test and try it by the Scriptures and in doing so, you will always find "safety". Amen!

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SEEKING GODLY COUNSEL (part 4)

The Blessing of Taking Godly Counsel

Proverbs 11:14, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."

One of the largest battles a young disciple of the Lord will fight is with themselves and the carnal thoughts of self sufficiency. None of us want to admit to ourselves that we don't have the answers, especially when we leave home as young adults and try to make a go of it on our own. But the truth is, nobody knows it all. Paul taught us in Galatians 6:3, "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." I personally have benefitted greatly in life by going to people who possessed much more experience with life's problems than myself and taking their wise counsel. My father would tell me often 'the counsel you need most is found in the Bible', and 'If you would spend more time in the Book of Proverbs, you may ask me less and less for advice' (the point being his counsel would be the same as Solomon's).

According to Solomon, there is a blessing in Godly Counsel. Solomon says the person who is willing to seek Godly Counsel, will enjoy "safety". A closer examination of the word ("safety") will reveal the abundant blessings in receiving Godly Counsel. The word safety (Strong's #8668) teaches us of the rescue that we will experience in Godly counsel. When I read through the Book of Proverbs, I think about Solomon teaching his son Rehoboam about the dangers of the wicked, who would entice him to walk in their paths (Proverbs 1:10-19); the strange woman and the temptations of her appearance (Proverbs 7:6-27); the dangers of the uncontrolled tongue ((Proverbs 13:3); a slothful lifestyle (Proverbs 6:6-8); and the dangers of being given to strong drink (Proverbs 20:1 and Proverbs 23:29-30). Solomon, as a modern day firefighter would pull a person from a burning home, desired to rescue his son from the hell (temporal torment; Proverbs 5:5, 7:27, 9:18, 15:24, 23:14, 27:20) that surely comes with going in the way of sinners.

If we take a closer look at the word "safety", it will reveal even more. The word "safety" (derived from Hebrew - Teshuwah, pronounced 'tes-oo-aw') is also translated in the Old Testament as:

(a) Help, as in 1 Samuel 11:9, "ye shall have help..." There is help in life's challenges by asking for and seeking Godly counsel. David would teach us in Psalms 146:3, "Put not your trust in princes, nor the son of man, in whom there is no help" (help is the same Hebrew as "safety" in Proverbs 11:14).

(b) Salvation, as in 1 Samuel 19:5. "the LORD wrought a great salvation..." There is salvation

(temporal) that will be enjoyed by hearing and heeding to Godly counsel.

(c) Victory, as in 2 Samuel 19:2. "the victory in that day", which could be translated as thus to reference the joy and happiness that will be enjoyed by those who hearken unto the multitude of counsellors.

Brothers and Sisters, when we look back on the life that we have lived, have we experienced a rough path we have caused for ourselves? Job would say in Job 28:7, "There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and the vulture's eye hath not seen:..." Life is difficult enough without walking on the path where the scavenging birds of this world can pluck the life out of you. I pray that every child of grace would receive Godly counsel. And by doing so, will find a temporal salvation, help, victory and safety, being rescued from many of the troubles of this world. Amen!

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