

WISDOM or KNOWLEDGE – Where are You?

THE POWER OF BOTH!

Summary: The Man who is wise is able to manage both—good and bad.

Bible Verses: Ecclesiastes 12:13; Ecclesiastes 7:15-22; Luke 16:15; Proverbs 23:27-28; Proverbs 22:14; Romans 8:22-25; Romans 7:14-25; Ephesians 4:14,15

Video Clip: YouTube – “Toy Story 2 “When She Loved Me” Sarah McLachlan 1999”

Music: “Waiting ‘Round to Die” performed by Townes VanZandt

Resources: *The Best Question Ever* by Andy Stanley and *Ecclesiastes*

October 29, 2015



“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”
—T.S. Eliot

Knowledge is gathered from learning and education, while most say that wisdom is gathered from day-to-day experiences and is a state of being wise. Knowledge is merely having clarity of facts and truths, while wisdom is the practical ability to make consistently good decisions in life. God desires that your life be a masterpiece that reflects His greatness and your uniqueness. But to create a masterpiece with your life, you must submit yourself to the hand of the Master. That moment of awareness and surrender is the beginning of true wisdom. You must allow God to influence each stroke on the canvas of your life. This series will lead you to a path of wisdom by considering the Book of Ecclesiastes, movie clips, story, and other resources.

LIVE IN REALITY – EMBRACE BOTH GOOD & BAD! – Ecclesiastes 7:15-22

1. Embrace genuine _____ and “_____”, not ... Nice Christian, Prudish Christian, Sanctimonious Christian, Tight-shoes Christian, Pursued Lips Christian, Stickler Christian, Insufferable Christian, Doctrinally correct Christian, Know-it-all Christian, Ostentatious Christian, Quiet-time-every-day-or-I'll-go-to-Hell Christian, Conceited Christian, Orthodox Christian, Denominational Christian, etc.
2. What men admire is not necessarily _____ (Luke 16:15).
3. Don't be _____ ... lies, pretense, and hypocrisies can be polished up to shine like marble. Everyone sins. Judge men according to Scriptures and not by appearances (Eccl. 7:20).
4. The _____ is the antidote for religious foolishness (Eccl. 7:18). True wisdom is strength, while the desire to appear wise is suicide. Do not be hyper over the sins of others (7:21-22).
5. POINT: Not everything “righteous” is all that good. Not everything “sinful” is all that bad. Only a fool jumps to pious and edifying conclusions. Embrace _____!

SEX IS A POOR SUBSTITUTE FOR REAL LOVE! – ECCLESIASTES 7:23-29

1. _____ tell themselves they are escaping God's framework for life at the very moment they are falling into the trap which HE has set for them (Eccl. 7:26). A man may think he can escape from God though his addictions and adulteries. (I Kings 11:1-10; Proverbs 23:27-28; Proverbs 22:14).
2. Solomon found virtually _____.
3. Conclusion: God made us upright; we have sought out many schemes. The _____ is the only answer!

EMBRACE GOOD & BAD!

1. If you do not have the ability to tolerate and deal with the simultaneous existence of _____, you cannot successfully deal with and live in this world, for the world and you are precisely that: Good & Bad! You live in a world that has BOTH – Good & Bad.
2. The Ideal Self is the one you can _____ and _____! (Romans 8:22-25; Ephesians 4:14,15). It is who we were and who we will be one day. You naturally value the ideal self more than the real. It works better, looks better, functions better, and needs less maintenance. It is a better model than the real thing, but the problem is it's a fantasy—it's not real!
3. The Real Self is the one _____, not the one you wish to be (Romans 7:14-25). The Bible teaches two themes throughout:
 - You are created in the image of God and that you have incredible value! > The Ideal.
 - You are sinful and broken > The Real!
 - BOTH are true, and BOTH need to be reconciled into a grace-giving relationship with God and others.
4. If you adopt a _____, one of condemnation and wrath toward what is real, then you have a divided house. Your ideal self will judge and condemn your real self into nonexistence. You will use shame, guilt, hiding, denial, splitting, and other defenses to hide the real self. Whatever you do not accept in grace will be under judgment and condemnation, and you will hide it behind a psychological fig leaf.
5. If you adopt a _____ toward your real self, there is hope for healing and transformation. If you are able to accept the parts of yourself you do not feel are ideal, then those parts will be loved and healed. Acceptance is the answer to the dilemma of the ideal versus the real. That is GRACE!
6. Men deal with the _____ in 4 ways:
 - Denial of Bad = See Matthew 23:25-27; Romans 3:23.
 - Denial of Good = Romans 1:18-23.
 - Attack & Judge = II Corinthians 7:10.
 - Acceptance = Proverbs 17:9; Romans 15:7; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12,13.
7. The nature of the relationship between the Ideal and Real—one of corrections toward a _____, instead of one of _____ toward the Real Self who fails offers transformation and healing. “No Condemnation” transforms lives!!!

ACTION: Journal This!

1. What event or circumstance in your life moves you to ask “Why?”
2. What do you do when “Why” is not resolved?
3. How do you deal with Ambivalence?

Bible Verses

Ecclesiastes 12:12-13

¹²⁻¹³ But regarding anything beyond this, dear friend, go easy. There's no end to the publishing of books, and constant study wears you out so you're no good for anything else. The last and final word is this:
Fear God. Do what he tells you.

Ecclesiastes 7:15-22

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ I've seen it all in my brief and pointless life—here a good person cut down in the middle of doing good, there a bad person living a long life of sheer evil. So don't knock yourself out being good, and don't go overboard being wise. Believe me, you won't get anything out of it. But don't press your luck by being bad, either. And don't be reckless. Why die needlessly?

¹⁸ It's best to stay in touch with both sides of an issue. A person who fears God deals responsibly with all of reality, not just a piece of it.

¹⁹ Wisdom puts more strength in one wise person than ten strong men give to a city.

²⁰ There's not one totally good person on earth, not one who is truly pure and sinless.

²¹⁻²² Don't eavesdrop on the conversation of others. What if the gossip's about you and you'd rather not hear it? You've done that a few times, haven't you—said things behind someone's back you wouldn't say to his face?

Luke 16:14-18

¹⁴⁻¹⁸ When the Pharisees, a money-obsessed bunch, heard him say these things, they rolled their eyes, dismissing him as hopelessly out of touch. So Jesus spoke to them: "You are masters at making yourselves look good in front of others, but God knows what's behind the appearance.

What society sees and calls monumental, God sees through and calls monstrous. God's Law and the Prophets climaxed in John; now it's all kingdom of God—the glad news and compelling invitation to every man and woman. The sky will disintegrate and the earth dissolve before a single letter of God's Law wears out. Using the legalities of divorce as a cover for lust is adultery; using the legalities of marriage as a cover for lust is adultery.

Proverbs 23:27-28

²⁷⁻²⁸ A whore is a bottomless pit; a loose woman can get you in deep trouble fast. She'll take you for all you've got; she's worse than a pack of thieves.

Proverbs 22:14

¹⁴ The mouth of a whore is a bottomless pit; you'll fall in that pit if you're on the outs with GOD.

Romans 8:22-25

²²⁻²⁵ All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's *within* us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

Romans 7:14-25

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ I can anticipate the response that is coming: "I know that all God's commands are spiritual, but I'm not. Isn't this also your experience?" Yes. I'm full of myself—after all, I've spent a long time in sin's prison. What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary.

¹⁷⁻²⁰ But I need something *more*! For if I know the law but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't *do* it. I decide to do good, but I don't *really* do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

²¹⁻²³ It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

²⁴ I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

²⁵ The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

Ephesians 4:14-16

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ No prolonged infancies among us, please. We'll not tolerate babes in the woods, small children who are an easy mark for impostors. God wants us to grow up, to know the whole truth and tell it in love—like Christ in everything. We take our lead from Christ, who is the source of everything we do. He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love.

WAITING 'ROUND TO DIE

Written and performed by Townes Van Zandt

Sometimes I don't know where this dirty road is taking me
Sometimes I can't even see the reason why
I guess I keep on gamblin', lots of booze and lots of ramblin'
It's easier than just a-waitin' 'round to die

One-time friends I had a ma, I even had a pa
He beat her with a belt once cause she cried
She told him to take care of me, she headed down to Tennessee
It's easier than just a-waitin' 'round to die

I came of age and found a girl in a Tuscaloosa bar
She cleaned me out and hit it on the sly

I tried to kill the pain, I bought some wine and hopped a train
Seemed easier than just a-waitin' 'round to die

A friend said he knew where some easy money was
We robbed a man and brother did we fly
The posse caught up with me, drug me back to Muskogee
It's two long years, just a-waitin' 'round to die

Now I'm out of prison, I got me a friend at last
He don't steal or cheat or drink or lie
His name's codeine, he's the nicest thing I've seen
Together we're gonna wait around and die

Philip K. Hardin, M.A., M.Div.

Director of Business & Professional Outreach, Intl.

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist & Licensed Professional Counselor

Email: phil@bpintl.org

Webpage: www.bpintl.org

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EMBRACE GOOD & BAD! - continued

4. If you adopt a **judgmental tone**, one of condemnation and wrath toward what is real, then you have a divided house. Your ideal self will judge and condemn your real self into nonexistence. You will use shame, guilt, hiding, denial, splitting, and other defenses to hide the real self. Whatever you do not accept in grace will be under judgment and condemnation, and you will hide it behind a psychological fig leaf.
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