

Articles and Sermons :: The Necessity of God's Wisdom by Robert Wurtz II

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Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there. (James 3:13-17)

The book of James in many respects is a book about wisdom. It teaches us that we can lack wisdom during the great trials of our lives and if we do we can ask God for it, who gives it liberally and without reprimanding those who ask. Moreover, it teaches us that there are two types of wisdom: earthly/sensual/demonic and the wisdom of God. We can string together sentences that make sense and seem to convey intelligence; but the source can be ungodly. The devil can impart "wisdom" that will advise according to his objectives. God imparts wisdom in order to advise according to His objectives. The challenge to God's will is often one of two things: compromise or competition. We know what compromise is, but what about competition?

God gives wisdom to those who are determined to know and convey the truth. This requires sincere introspection. We need to understand what is motivating us before we can begin to examine situations and determine a wise solution. For example, James reminds us, But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. The envy James speaks of is perhaps understood by the English word rivalry. This is an "us against them" state of the heart. It seeks to compete with others for the vanities of the world within the House of God. and among the people of God. James characterizes the behavior as "lying against the truth." That is to say, it betrays all the truth for which a Christian - yea - a minister of the Gospel purports to stand for.

When two parties are in a state of competition, they cannot rightly love one another. Their wisdom cannot be pure, for it is corrupted by the displeasure of the blessings that attend their rival. Their wisdom cannot be peaceable for it flows from the fountain of enmity and opposition. It cannot be gentle, for it springs from an attitude of antagonism. In this condition, one must understand that they are likely moving in the "wisdom" that is earthly/sensual/demonic. They are receptive to thoughts that further the competitiveness and strife between the parties. Bitter envy is a beachhead from which the enemy can launch devastating attacks against Christians.

If we have bitter envy, we must repent. Clear your mind and heart of all ill-will and antagonism. Renounce hostility and resentment. Sometimes compromise can create conflict that results in competition. In fact, in some cases one party may wage war to end compromise of various kinds, while the other side sees the conflict as a competition. They are battling, but for different reasons. Situations like this are almost never resolved because the parties are generally unaware that each side has different objectives. This is where the introspection comes in. We have to allow God and others whom God may use, to point out things that we need to be aware of so we can see the situation clearly.

I have observed over the years both in business and in ministry that when a person of little or no authority questions or voices concerns to authority figures (managers or ministers, etc.) the person in authority almost always takes it personally as a personal attack. There are few people who are meek enough to take the concerns of their subordinates (or sheep) seriously without jumping to conclusions about motive. This is particularly true where nepotism (friends and family: see footnote) is involved or believed to be involved. It is human nature to want to protect friends and family. Everyone knows this, so it is often assumed that favoritism is in play; especially if there are questionable decisions being made that portend to nepotism. This can greatly complicate a situation, especially when a friend or family member is in the wrong and the authority figure will not acknowledge the fact or don't believe it. What complicates the situation even more is when there is a mixture of real concerns plus bitter envy and strife. Real concerns + real envy = a real mess. These are situations that, in the words of James, "try our faith" and require the wisdom of God.

Once we have settled the matter of motivations and have purified our hearts before the Lord, we are ready to ask for wis

dom. Some situations demand the wisdom of God; especially situations where there has been a lot of earthly/sensual/demonic wisdom being spoken. The enemy can build a castle of falsehood and misconceptions until people are misled completely from the truth. They believe things that are false. These falsehoods are being used as part of their rationale for their position of subjects. Few things are worse than building a perspective from a bunch of lies and half-truths. Exaggeration of minor details and the marginalizing of important ones are only the beginnings of deception.

Solomon had a way of getting to the truth. He once suggested cutting a baby in half to share it between two feuding mothers who each claimed the child was theirs. The real mother declined and Solomon recognized her from her attitude towards the child. We must likewise pray that God will give us wisdom to get to the bottom of things. We need to pray for wisdom to deal with irrationality. We must pray for wisdom to counter the earthly/sensual/demonic.

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”
(James 3:17-18 NKJV)

When God's wisdom comes it will not be with human hostility, but with Divine generosity. We must be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. This is the practical side of Christianity. When we can listen and hold our peace without getting angry, we are in position to hear, speak, and employ God's wisdom. One of the key uses of wisdom is making peace. Anyone can stir something up, but it takes the wisdom of God to clear a matter. We must check ourselves and then pray God for the wisdom to handle the "divers" temptations and trials of life.

Footnotes:

nepotism |ˈnɛpəˈtɪzəm|
noun

the practice among those with power or influence of favoring relatives or friends, esp. by giving them jobs.

DERIVATIVES

nepotist noun.

nepotistic |ˈnɛpəˈtɪstɪk| adjective

ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from French *népotisme*, from Italian *nepotismo*, from *nipote* ‘nephew’ (with reference to privileges bestowed on the ‘nephews’ of popes, who were in many cases their illegitimate sons).

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