

## **Wisdom Is Needed To Live the Far Better Life**

The Far Better Life - Part 3

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How many of you ever watch infomercials on television? There are a lot of people who spend a lot of time watching infomercials. There's a whole channel on television devoted to infomercials and it sustains itself because it really does get people to buy things. Infomercials know how to push people's "want" buttons. They make things so appealing and so attractive. They make people feel like they really need the product and if you commit to just five easy payments of \$19.95 you can have that item sent directly to you in less than five days. How many of you have never bought anything from an infomercial? There's a lot of wisdom in that decision. Most of the time you find the product does not live up to the promise. And the painful truth is that you really live without it.

What if I gave you an infomercial about something that could enable you to live a far better life than you could live without it? This item will better your life. It will help you improve in every aspect of your life. It will help you develop stronger more loving relationships. It will help you be a kinder gentler person. It will even help you be a more peaceful person. Wouldn't you want to buy that item? What is that item I'm talking about? It is the Bible.

The Bible has been used by billions of satisfied customers down through the centuries. It's changed more lives than the do-it-yourself jet stream facelift or the deluxe Ginsu knife set, or all the other infomercial products put together! The Bible says you and I have a choice. We can choose to live our lives according to the wisdom of the world, or we can choose to live our lives according to the wisdom of

the God who created us. The wisdom that will enable us to live the far better life comes from God and it is a gift to us from God through His Word.

There are several books in the Bible categorized as wisdom literature because these books are full of wisdom and references to wisdom. One of those books is Proverbs and here are some things it has to say about wisdom: *"For the Lord grants wisdom, and in his mouth are knowledge and understanding."* (Proverbs 2:6) *"For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will fill you with joy."* (Proverbs 2:10) *"Happy is the person who finds wisdom."* (Proverbs 3:13) *"Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do."* (Proverbs 4:7) *"If you live a life guided by wisdom, you won't limp or stumble as you run."* (Proverbs 4:12) These verses tell us that wisdom comes from the Lord through his Word, and having wisdom will make a person happy. The key word in this last verse is the word "if". If you and I choose to live a life guided by God's wisdom, you will move from living the good life to living the far better life God has designed for you to live. That wisdom is found by hearing, reading, studying, meditation on, and memorizing God's Word, and it will enable you to live a far better life than you could possibly live on your own. Godly wisdom begins when you decide to leave the world's wisdom behind and pursue God's wisdom.

This message about wisdom is for everyone. It's for the person who may not really know much about the Bible or may not have much of a relationship with God. It's for the person who's been a Christian for years and years, whose walked faithful with God a long, long time. This message is also for all those people in between. Wherever you are in your walk with the Lord, this message is for you! **Here's what God's wisdom will do for you if you pursue it.**

**THE FIRST THING GOD'S WISDOM WILL DO FOR YOU IS IT WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH.** That's a promise. God's wisdom, found in his

Word, will strengthen your faith. It will make you a stronger follower of Jesus Christ. Acts 20, verse 32 says, ***"And now I entrust you to God and His care and to His wonderful words that are able to build your faith and give you all the inheritance of those who are set apart for Himself."***

Many things will strengthen your faith. You might be in a small group study fellowship like one of our adult Sunday School classes or our Family Night study group. That will definitely strengthen your faith. You might read a good book designed to encourage you in your faith. You might spend time with other Christians who encourage you in your faith. You may come to church each Sunday to worship with other believers and hear a sermon. All these things can strengthen your faith. But all these things are dependent on other people, people to write the books, people to encourage you, people to teach you and preach to you. But when you learn to study God's Word on your own, seeking his wisdom on your own, you won't be so dependent on others. You will have reached a new level of maturity as a Christian. God's wisdom will be directly accessible to you and it will strengthen your faith.

If you came to me and said, **"You know, I'm just not growing spiritually any more."** My response would be, **"I'm sorry to hear that. Are you studying God's Word daily?"** We can't grow spiritually unless we are spending time in God's Word. God has promised that His Word will accomplish His purpose in our lives - it will strengthen our faith. If we are having a difficult time trusting God it almost always means we aren't feeding on His Word. Pastor Rick Warren says, **"Worry is the warning light that God has been pushed to the sidelines. The moment you put Him back at the center [of your life] you will have peace."**

**THE SECOND THING GOD'S WISDOM WILL DO FOR YOU IS IT WILL GUIDE YOUR DECISIONS.** God promises to help you make good decisions

if you will seek to be guided by his wisdom. The best decisions people make in their lives have their roots in the Bible. Many of our Presidents have pointed back to the Bible as the source of their greatest decisions. George Washington said, **"It's impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."** Abraham Lincoln said, **"The Bible is the best gift God has given to man. Without it we could not know right from wrong."** Theodore Roosevelt said, **"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."** Bill Clinton said, **"I didn't read some very important sections of the Bible. Party on!"** (Just kidding on that last one!)

God promises to guide us through His word. Psalm 119 reads, ***"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*** I love that imagery. God's Word is the light you need to live your life. Martin Luther, of the Sixteenth Century Reformation, said, **"Put the Word of God out of sight and there is no help or counsel remaining."** The Bible will give you wisdom to guide your decisions if you will keep it in sight, if you will consult it. The best test for how well you are using God's Word is this: if you find yourself confused a lot of the time, lacking direction, you may need more of God's wisdom in your life.

**THE THIRD THING GOD'S WISDOM WILL DO IS IT WILL ENHANCE YOUR LIFE.** Joshua 1:8 reads, ***"Do not let this book of [God's] law depart from your mouth. Meditate on it, day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written [in it]. Then you will be prosperous and successful."*** Now that doesn't mean if you read the Bible you'll get rich. Some preachers teach that. It's called the prosperity gospel. That's not what I'm teaching. God has a different way of defining success. The world defines success by what we have and what we achieve and what we accumulate. God doesn't define success that way. The Bible is very clear that God defines success very differently. Living a life that

reflects the character of Christ, his faithful obedience and servants heart is how God defines success. Being a good steward of your gifts and talents to the glory of God is how God defines success. Loving others as Christ loves you is how God defines success. Treating others as you would want to be treated is how God defines success. Valuing others and all of God's creation is how God defines success. Raising the next generation to know the Lord and serve him is how God defines success. His wisdom will help you to do these things.

**THE FOURTH THING GOD'S WISDOM WILL DO FOR YOU IS IT WILL CHANGE YOUR HEART.** This is the most important thing God's wisdom will do for you. When your heart is changed, your life will be change. Hebrews 4:12 says, *"For the Word of God is full of living power. It's alive and active. It's sharper than the sharpest knife cutting deep into our innermost being and desires. It exposes us for what we really are."* This is how the Bible describes itself. What is a knife used for? It is used for trimming away things that aren't important or desired. When you allow God's Word to soak into your life, it cuts away the stuff from your heart that keeps you from living life as God intended it to be lived. It changes your heart.

The Bible will change your life if you will let it. It will strengthen your faith, guide your decisions, and enhance your life if you will let it. **What holds you back from experiencing the benefits of the Bible and God's wisdom in your life.** **ONE THING IS THAT PARTS OF THE BIBLE ARE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.** I went to seminary and studied Greek and Hebrew so I could understand the Bible in its original language. I took courses on every book in the Bible and I studied theology so I could understand the Bible better and yet there are some passages I don't fully understand. I've read the Bible almost daily for 35 years and yet there are passages I don't completely understand.

**ANOTHER THING THAT HOLDS YOU BACK FROM BENEFITING FROM GOD'S WISDOM IS THAT SOME PARTS OF THE BIBLE HAVE BECOME TOO FAMILIAR TO YOU.** You've heard the verse a thousand times that it's lost its initial impact. It just doesn't get your attention like it used to. You've heard that familiarity breeds contempt. In the Christian life, familiarity with certain passages of the Bible breeds complacency. **"For God so loved the world... yea, yea, yea. I know that already. It's no big deal to me anymore."**

**ANOTHER THING THAT HOLDS YOU BACK FROM BENEFITING FROM GOD'S WISDOM IS THAT IT'S NOT A PRIORITY TO YOU.** We set our priorities by what we think is really important. You won't seek God's wisdom if you don't think it's important. The way you spend your time points to what you really value in life. You give time to what you deem important.

**SO WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO GET MORE OUT OF THE BIBLE? THE FIRST STEP IS TO APPROACH THE BIBLE WITH ENTHUSIASM.** Be excited about it! Set aside time each day to spend in God's Word. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter says, *"Like newborn babies, crave spiritual milk, so by it you may grow up in your salvation."* Have you ever watched a baby that really wants a bottle? They fuss and cry until they get it and then they eat like there's no tomorrow. That's enthusiasm. We've got to crave God's Word. Ask God to give you enthusiasm for his Word. If you have no enthusiasm for reading the Bible on your own, perhaps you need to join a Bible study group. People join exercise groups to make them exercise. Perhaps you need to join a Bible study group to help you study the Bible.

**ANOTHER STEP IS TO EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE WITH CONSISTENCY AND REGULARITY.** There are many things you do in your life just because you know it's good for you, like brushing your teeth and taking a shower regularly. If you don't do these things consistently you'll begin to stink. Even though you may

not approach them with enthusiasm, you still do them or you won't be very healthy. It's the same way with our spiritual lives. Our spiritual lives will begin to stink if we don't regularly spend time in God's Word.

There was a group of people in the early church that understood this very well. They were the Bereans. It says, *"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."* You should do the same. Examine the Scriptures daily to see if what I say is the true. The Bible is the source of what is true and right.

**ANOTHER STEP YOU CAN TAKE IS TO DISCUSS GOD'S WORD WITH OTHERS.** This is a really big part of allowing God's Word to impact your life. Talk to your friends and loved ones about what you read in the Bible. Notice this says DISCUSS with others and not PREACH at others. If you don't have friends you can talk to about God, then maybe you need to make some new friends. God admonished His people when he said, *"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*

**FINALLY, PUT GOD'S WORD INTO ACTION.** Put into practice what you are learning. Obey what God commands. Use what he teaches you in some way. Put the wisdom God gives you into action. The Bible warns us, *"Don't fool yourself into thinking that you are a listener when you are anything but, letting the word go in one ear and out the other. Act on what you hear! Those who hear and don't act are like those who glance in the mirror, walk away, and two minutes later have no idea who they are or what they look like."*