

Counsel

Counselors are not just those we pay to sit across the desk from us and give us advice. Counselors are those who influence our choices; a counselor can be a wife or a newscaster on the radio. It is vital that we guard who influences us; those who influence our thinking are our counselors.

David heard of a neighboring kingdom's loss. The new king's father died, and that man had been a friend to David in a time of need. So David, in kindness, sent gifts and words of consolation to this new king who lost his father. Wrong counselors led the young king to abuse the messengers and scorn the conciliatory words of David. A battle followed, and many lives were lost because this young king listened to the wrong council.

2 Samuel 10:2 “Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.”

vs. 3 “And the princes of the children of Ammon said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?”

After the wicked reign of Queen Athalia, Jehoiada the priest managed to get Joash on the throne. This young king, under the guidance of Jehoiada found a great prosperity, and the kingdom was blessed. But years later when the preacher died and the king stood alone without the counsel of the old man, he was approached by important men, flattered, and found himself turning away from the old paths; then the kingdom was destroyed. What motive did these evil counselors have? What would have moved them to lead the king to go against his training? All we know is that evil counselors exist, people who will use flattery or words of false wisdom to get us away from our training.

2 Chronicles 24:17 “Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.”

vs. 18 “And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.”

vs. 19 “Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.”

Paul warned the Ephesian elders of men who would come from within or without to turn the church from its course.

Acts 20:29 “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

vs. 30 “Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

Every conference you attended, every book you read, every sermon to which you listen acts as a counselor for good or for evil. (Proverbs 13:20) The friends with whom you allow your children to spend time or that guest in your home whose life represents something opposite of what you believe both act as counselors in the hearts of your children. The ladies Bible study group or the casual texting back-and-forth among people who appear to be friends, are, in actuality, wicked counselors against whom we must guard ourselves.

Peter had a habit of reminding people over and over and over to keep the truths and principles he had given them. He wanted those truths deeply ingrained in their hearts and minds.

2 Peter 1:15 “Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.”

Of course we are all familiar with the tragic story of Rehoboam who forsook the counsel of the old men -- men who had stood by his father, but instead listened to his peers.

2 Chronicles 10:8-10 “But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him.”

Another illustration of this principle is Ahaziah whose family members led him astray.

2 Chronicles 22:3 “He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.”

vs. 4 “Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction.”

Kind and complementary words can be the counsel that brings great ruin.

Proverbs 7:21 “With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him.”

vs. 22 “He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;”

vs. 23 “Till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life.”

We fail to understand that a friend may be a counselor. A counselor may be a relative, as Amnon and his cousin, Jonadab; this relative, friend, and counselor became the death of the man. We may casually hang around people in a social atmosphere while not grasping the deep influence their words have on our choices and future plans. A wife has an enormous influence on a husband's thinking. Those social friends with whom we stand around and listen to casually banter over politics, sports, and morality are our counselors; may we choose them well.

It is an old statement, but my most intimate counselors are in Heaven. These men taught me; and thanks to books and technology, their sermons and writings continue to preserve the life, family, and ministry God has given.

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