

TRUST

Good morning,

On several occasions in recent days, I have watched people make life-changing choices on the basis of a feeling or personal opinion, decisions which could change the destiny of family, children, marriage, and ministry. These life-changing decisions were all made, to the best of my knowledge, with no advice, counsel from an outside advisor, or wisdom from an older, more mature believer.

Recently, I happened to visit a godly eighty-year-old. We chatted, and he requested my opinion on a matter. I was really hesitant to give my opinion, as the question was about a matter pertaining to a senior citizen's personal choice, an area out of my expertise. I assured him that whatever he thought was best, I would agree with it. He said, "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14)

I find it interesting how the aged Christian knows to ask for advice. I feel sorry for people who have been hurt or have reached the point of not resting in the wisdom of godly counsel. I, for one, enjoy the most amazing blessings and have, again and again, leaned on the words of another. I came to our valley sight unseen upon the advice of a deacon in my home church, my pastor, and the president of my college. I married my wife upon the approval of my parents, her parents, and the pastor. Honestly, my mom arranged our first date.

Proverbs 10:8 "The wise in heart will receive commandments..."

Proverbs 10:17 "He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction..."

I am not saying that someone will make the wrong choice without counsel; I am just saying there are spiritual promises that come with the humility of seeking advice. One may arrive just as much in the will of God as I do, by his own planning and thought, but when plans go wrong (which they often do), I will rest in the fact that I carefully harkened to the wisdom of those whom God placed in my life; the one who made decisions on his own will, perhaps, continually question the decisions he made himself.

Recently, I spoke to someone who is currently separated from his spouse. He told that at one point, his marriage was "wrong from the beginning." It may have been, but the trouble the couple was having is not uncommon and could have been experienced by any number of other couples. This couple started without guidance or approval of leadership, and because of that, they doubted their choices and were more willing to give up in difficult times.

My wife and I walked down a road paved with the wisdom of others; in our troubling times, we know there is a way to press on and win the battles.

We have faced some terrible trials in the past thirty-five years, but one thing I have not done is doubt the decision to come and start this church. I was safely in the realm of godly advice and wise counsel; therefore I need not doubt, no matter the trial.

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

Safety is a result of good counsel. Safety! I want to be safe. I want my children safe. I want my wife safe. Therefore, I will happily seek godly advice before making any life-changing decisions. Again, I feel sorry for those who have been let down by leadership to the extent that they can not trust those wise men and women God has placed in their lives. I feel “lucky,” or blessed, and thankful or joyous that my world has been such that I can rest in the counsel of godly friends. Honestly, I believe that confidence is rooted in faith in the Bible and the God of Heaven rather than the wisdom of men. God will not lie to me; He will not deceive me. God knows what is best. God can do what is best, and He cannot be thwarted by the evil plans of men. Oh, how much we ought to trust His Word and rest in His lovingkindness.

I do not fear to seek counsel. Worrying that an advisor may give an answer opposite of that which the seeker wants to do is commonplace. Some make their plan and then hesitate to tell others, for fear they will be told it is an unwise choice. In reality, this man has gone too far already and simply WANTS to follow through with his plan and is not willing to trust anyone or anything except his own logic.

The book of Proverbs warns us not to trust our own understanding:
Proverbs 3:5 “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.”

I am not afraid counselors will mess up my plans; I am afraid I will mess up the plan of God by my own wishes and desires. The thought in Proverbs 14:12 scares me: “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man...”

The man did not do wrong on purpose; it just seemed right to him.
His plan seemed right, but it hurt a great number of people!

What seems RIGHT in our own eyes may be completely wrong! Good advice protects us from wrong that seems right to us.

Deuteronomy 12:8 “Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.”

We all know the mess of the nation Israel in the book of Judges— the time when they did that which was RIGHT in their own eyes:

Judges 17:6 “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Judges 21:25 “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”

Do you see the trouble? There was no king, no authority, and no wise leader to guide and protect the people from foolish ideas. “In those days there was no king in Israel...” so everyone did that which they thought was RIGHT — but their idea of right was so wrong.

I am blessed beyond measure for the trust God has allowed me to have in the plan of God and the wisdom of others.

In the past thirty-five years, we have had deacons’ meetings and men’s meetings to conduct all major business. Twice in these many years, I have disagreed completely with the majority of our men. But since they were a large majority, I joined them, publicly sided with the group, and both times the men of our church were exactly right and I was wrong. Often, the Bible refers to situations in which two or three witnesses establish every word. Let me throw in a potential stumbling block: I would not make a life-changing decision without my wife’s believing it was correct. We are one flesh. What I do will affect her. I would not have come to this city to start a church without her feeling comfortable with it. I would not move, or buy a house, or make any major change without the wisdom of my wife and her being in agreement with me in the decision. I do not ask her to guide my life choices, but I often bring ideas to her for her input; in many situations, I do not proceed without her faith in my plan.

One last **mind-boggling** thought: How often have we heard someone say that they just know in their heart their decision is the right thing to do? We already read in Proverbs 3:5-6 that we are not to lean unto our own understanding; but look at this:

Proverbs 23:19 “Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.”

Here is the basic truth:

Hear, listen to good advice, and then “guide thine heart.” Listen to the wisdom of godly leaders, and then tell your heart what to feel. Control your feelings and heart by the wisdom of counselors. Some might doubt this concept, but let us work it into a scenario:

A marriage is struggling. There is a lady where the husband works who is very nice, kind, and attentive. The husband’s HEART says having an affair is right.

From outside the situation, we all clearly know the wrong of the situation and the solution to fixing it. One must forbid his heart to feel that way, change what his heart feels, or prevent his heart from ever getting those feelings.

We CONTROL our hearts — WHICH IS WHAT WE SHOULD DO IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE — control our feelings by wise counsel.

Three times in the past decade, active members of our church have come to my office to announce they were moving. We talked and prayed, and they moved. These families may be right where they belong, and everything may turn out fine for them, but there is a difference between *good* and *best*. It is possible that these couples found *good* and forfeited *best* for themselves or their children. I cannot imagine missing the *best* God has for me or my family because I chose *good*.

Proverbs 23:19 “Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way.

I am blessed; God has helped me to rest freely and comfortably in the wisdom of my spiritual leaders, my friends, and in some cases, my wife; and I love rest!!!

Pastor Goddard