

Pastoral Leadership & Counsel

Prior to getting to the issue of pastoral counsel, several things should be clear.

1. We need good men to teach us the Bible — Ezra was that kind of man.

Ezra 7:10 “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.” (KJV)

Nehemiah 8:2 “And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.”

vs. 7 “...and...caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place.” (KJV)

2. We need to base what we believe on what the Bible says.

3. Things we learn from the Bible should not change.

4. The many decisions that cross our path in the course of life, should be guided by the Spirit of God and good upbringing. God and common sense will guide us through the majority of things we face in daily living.

5. Difficult choices — this is where the questions begin.

There are times when our grooming, our Bible, and our own wisdom may not answer the question of the hour. In these hours, we need a wiser, more godly leader. Often that will be a preacher, but it may be someone else. The fact is the Bible speaks much of counsel, not just "do what the Bible says in this book, this chapter," but listen to the wisdom of older, wiser men and women.

Much criticism comes to us when we suggest the preacher may have some wisdom you need. Yet, Titus 2 says older women are to teach the younger women to love their husbands. Is that not obvious? Is it not clear a gal should love her husband? Surely, but there are details, difficulties, and complications; this is where the wiser, older women come into the picture. There is a need for counsel.

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

Proverbs 12:15 "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."

Proverbs 19:20 "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end."

2 Samuel 17 tells us of Absalom, Ahithophel, Zadok, and of serious decisions. The issues here are good and bad counsel, and to whom we should listen. There are many choices in which there are no clear answers, and in those times, we need wisdom.

I love my church staff; I love my deacons; I love the wisdom of the godly men that I can rely upon from my men's meetings. Counsel is vital! Our personal view of a situation is too limited, our perspective too narrow, and our influence often too great to make choices based upon our own thoughts without gaining information from others.

Rehoboam faced a similar situation in 1 Kings 12 — there were good and bad advisors. His choice was monumental.

Every great general will gather information from his staff. Wise presidents have a cabinet of advisors. It is not a foolish doctrine of fundamentalism to listen — it is wise. When times of difficulty arise, it is good to have a man of God from whom to seek wisdom. No different than getting medical advice from a specialist, it is prudent to have a cabinet of spiritual people upon which to lean.

Just because a person has a "Dr." before his name does not mean we trust him to make major medical choices, nor should we simply throw our major decisions in life on the shoulder of a pastor. If that man has not proven himself to be a wise counselor, do not be so foolish as to change your life's course on the basis of his opinion.

Remember Proverbs: "...with good advice make war." To achieve our goals, it will require "good advice," not just the ideas of some guy in a pulpit.

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