

Walking With Wise Men
(appropriate for mid-schoolers or older)
Michael R. Daily 4/27/04

Proverbs 13:20 – He who walks with wise men will be wise but the companion of fools will suffer harm.

The bible teaches that wisdom is extremely valuable in life. There are 3 ways to acquire it:

1) Trial & Error

Try things and see what works and what hurts you over a 30 year period – although very painful and slow – you can acquire some wisdom this way.

2) Applying Biblical Principles in Your Life

Proverbs 1:1-4 - The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: To know wisdom and instruction, To discern the sayings of understanding, To receive instruction in wise behavior, Righteousness, justice and equity; To give prudence to the naive, To the youth knowledge and discretion,

Proverbs is the only book of the Bible that claims it was written specifically to give wisdom to the Youth so you should be reading a chapter of Proverbs everyday. In fact, all our verses tonight will be in Proverbs.

3) Walking with Wise Men

It is critical that you pick the best friends you can because you are going to become like them and will experience the consequences of that.

I want you to think about the kids your age that you know at school, sports, music group, Awanas, youth group, etc. I want you to write down the names of the kids your age you know who you would say are truly wise people – people you could go to with a difficult, complicated personal problem and they could give you the best advice to solve it. Lets take a survey. Raise your hand - More than Five?, five, four, three, two, one? So, we have a problem – God wants us to walk with wise men but the truth is there are few people your age who are truly wise.

You all are familiar with one type of friend – the peer friend. These are people your age that are in the same life situations you are in. Unfortunately, the number of wise men among these types of friends is limited. However, there are other kinds of friends you need to develop – friends that have wisdom – but these friends are very different in the way you handle them – how you talk and act around them.

Tonight we are going to learn about these other types of friends, how you develop them, and the benefits you will derive from having them.

Proverbs 22:11 – He who loves purity of heart and whose speech is gracious, the king is his friend.

When the book of Proverbs refers to “the King” who is it referring to?
Anyone who is in a position of authority over you.

So, not only can we have peer friends but also friends who are in a different peer group than we are used to. If we are going to develop a friendship with them we need to understand them a little better.

Three Types of Wise Men

1) Person in a position of authority over you (parent, teacher, coach, manager). Authority – “the right to command and enforce obedience in those under them, the right to act (hire, fire, reward, punish). This authority comes from God

(Romans 13:1-4 - Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.)

The World System will tell you to Question Authority, your flesh will tell you you are smarter than they are, Satan will tell you authority is bad, follow your heart instead. But God says that authority is given to men by him and it is good because it rewards those who do good and punishes those who do evil. God uses authority to teach us many lessons and to develop our character.

2) Spiritual mentor (parent, youth minister, pastor, christian collegiate staff). Find someone you want to be like.

3) Someone with a technical expertise you aspire to (scientist, engineer, musician, artist, etc.). Find someone who is where you want to be someday and is one of the best at it.

Compared to you these wise men:

Have less time

Have more knowledge

(Proverbs 10:14 - Wise men store up knowledge, But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand).

Have more understanding

(Proverbs 4:7 - The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; And with all your acquiring, get understanding.)

Have more Honor / Respect given to them

(Proverbs 3:35 - The wise will inherit honor, But fools display dishonor)

(Proverbs 22:29 - Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before obscure men).

Have more Power or Influence

(Proverbs 24:5 - A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power.)

Are very selective who they share their wisdom with:

Have more ability to identify and avoid:

1) Fools

(Proverbs 23:9 - Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, For he will despise the wisdom of your words.)

2) Scoffers, people who are wise in their own eyes

(Proverbs 3:7 -Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.)

3) People who are quarrelsome

(Proverbs 20:3 - Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any fool will quarrel.)

4) People who display dishonor (Proverbs 3:35)

5) People who joke sarcastically

(Proverbs 26:18-19 - Like a madman who throws Firebrands, arrows and death, So is the man who deceives his neighbor, And says, "Was I not joking?")

If a wise man decides that you are a fool he will never tell you that. In fact, he will probably smile at you, ask you how you are, pat you on the head – but what he won't do is waste his time sharing his wisdom with you.

Most wise men are wise in one area – may not be wise in other areas. That's OK. You can still learn from them.

Treat them all as if they have authority over you because in reality they do.

Wise men want to share their wisdom with younger people - but they do not want to waste their time – so they are very selective in who they will share their wisdom with. If you want to walk with wise men this is how you will need to act:

1) Accept Reproof

Proverbs 6:23 - For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life

Don't take it personally - reproofs for discipline are the way of life.

A reproof is when someone says "I like what you did here, I don't like what you did there, do it this way next time". Reproofs for discipline – that's life. They are not doing it to be mean or to pick on you. They are doing it because they can see that you have the ability to grow and improve.

Most of the people who will be in authority over you will be non-Christians. Why is that? Because most people are non-Christians. Do you think there may be times when these non-Christian authorities reprove you that they may not do it exactly right? They may be overly harsh or curse at you? But God still wants us to accept reproof – even when it is not done right.

When I was a young engineer I would take my circuit designs to my mentor and he would cuss at me and tell me what a stupid way to design a circuit. I could have decided that I did not deserve to be treated that way or gotten mad but if I did I would not have gotten his wisdom. So instead I didn't let it bother me I just said, "OK, so what is the right way to do it?" and then he would share his wisdom with me.

Proverbs 15:31 - He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof Will dwell among the wise.

Walking with wise men will, in fact, make you wise just as God says. Unfortunately, it is also emotionally challenging because walking with wise men can make you feel stupid. This is probably why more people don't do it. But the tradeoff is worth it.

2) Be willing to Receive Commands

Proverbs 10:8 - The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be ruined.

Story of Bank President / Little League Baseball Coach

There was a man, about 40 years old, married, had kids, a house, 2 cars and he worked downtown at the bank – in fact he was the president of the bank. And this man had 50 people working for him at the bank. Most of the people who worked for him were Dads and Moms but some were grandfathers and grandmothers. But these people worked for this man. When he told them to do something what did they do? They said "Right away" and they went and did it. And that is what this man experienced all day everyday at the bank.

Now this man was also a little league baseball coach. He coached a team of 13 year old boys. One day during practice he was moving the boys to different positions to see how they did. Ralph (name of a boy not in the audience) was playing shortstop. Coach said, "Ralph, move over to second base". Ralph said, "Aw, coach, I never get to play shortstop, its not fair, let me play shortstop for one more inning, PLEEEASE!" Coach said, "OK, one more inning".

Now let's think about what just happened here. Did Ralph get his way? Yes, he got to be shortstop for one more inning. But what did it cost him? Did Ralph make the king his friend? What was the coach thinking? The coach was thinking, "Everyday, adults happily do whatever I ask them to but this stupid 13 year old can't obey a simple command!" Ralph did not make the king his friend.

Now let's consider the same situation except this time Andrew (name of a boy in the class) is playing shortstop. Coach says, "Andrew, move to second base", Andrew yells, "Yes, coach" and runs as fast as he can to the new position. Coach turns to Jerry, his assistant coach. "Hey Jerry, did you see that?" (See what?) "Watch this! Andrew, first base, do it now!" (Yes Coach!) And there he goes! (Who is that kid?) "Miller-Andrew Miller. We need to keep an eye on him – you know I could teach some real baseball to a kid like that".

Do you see the difference? Andrew was making the King his friend.

Fast forward to the end of the baseball season. All the coaches in the league are meeting to decide which boys to pick for the all-star team. All the slots have been filled except for one and it has come down to Andrew or a boy like Ralph on another team.

Andrew's coach stands up and says loudly, "Andrew is a great kid – there is no way we are not putting him on the All-Star team". The other kid's coach is thinking, "I think my kid is a better ball player than Andrew but he's kind of a brat - I am not going to put myself out for him like that" and he says, "Go ahead, give it to Andrew" and just like that Andrew makes the all-star team.

When the king is your friend he will fight for you behind the scenes in ways that you will probably never know about.

3) Do Not Be Lazy

(Proverbs 10:26 - Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, So is the lazy one to those who send him).

4) Be Humble - knows he has a lot to learn, act like it.

(Proverbs 11:2 - When pride comes, then comes dishonor But with the humble is wisdom)

5) Listen to Advice

Proverbs 12:15 - The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

6) Seek Advice - , seeks advice instead of making assumptions

(Proverbs 13:10 - Through insolence comes nothing but strife, But wisdom is with those who receive counsel)

7) Cover Other's Transgressions

Proverbs 17:9 - He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.

8) Restrain Your Words & Have a Cool Spirit

Proverbs 17:27 - He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.

Mop Bucket Story

When I was in high school I worked on the air base at the flight line cafeteria. My job was to clean off tables, wash dishes, mop floors, and take out the garbage. When I was hired they showed me where everything was kept including the mop bucket which was kept next to the dishwashing machine.

After I had been working there about 2 months the health inspector came by and went through the whole place with my boss. My boss looked very tense and the inspector was writing things down as they went. I was cleaning tables when I heard my boss yell from the kitchen, "Daily, get in here". I ran into the kitchen where my boss and the health inspector were both looking at the mop bucket next to the dishwasher. My boss said, "What is that mop bucket doing there – you know it doesn't belong there – move it out back where it goes".

Now at this point I could have become indignant and said, "Wait a minute, that mop bucket was there when I hired on and it has been there for the past two months and you never said anything to me about not putting it there – its not my fault!

But instead I accepted the rebuke. I said, "Yes ma'am, I'm very sorry", and I got that bucket out of there!

But I have to tell you that I felt very discouraged afterwards because I had been working very hard to show that I was a good worker and my reputation was being ruined because I was being blamed for something that was not my fault – I felt terrible.

But that is not the end of the story. After the health inspector left, my boss came over to me and she put her arm around my shoulder and she said, "We came very close to being shut down by the health inspector. He said the only reason he decided to not shut us down was he was so impressed by how respectful you were and how quickly you obeyed. You saved us."

And then she said this, "I wish I had 100 more employees just like you".

That is where you want to be.

Sometimes there are more important things going on than you being treated fairly.

9) Does Not Compete With Wise Men

Proverbs 25:6-7 Do not claim honor in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of great men; For it is better that it be said to you, "Come up here," Than for you to be placed lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen.

Do you know how the world really works? How people are evaluated for rewards and opportunities? The boss will not compare your work to that of the older expert – he will ask the expert what he thinks of you. If you are competing with him or have not treated him as mentor – the response will be neutral to negative. If you have served him appropriately he will sing your praises.

Story of Young Engineers Competing with My Mentor

A few years ago I ran into my mentor. He is retired now but as we were talking he said, "I never told you this but remember when you were a young engineer – you had only been at the company a year or two? Well, one day the boss came into my office and asked me what I thought of this new crop of young engineers we had. You know what I told him? I said, "Those blanket blank blankety blanks – they're not worth a warm bucket of blank! Except for one, Daily, he is going to be a great design engineer!

Why did he say that? Were my engineering skills that much better than the other young engineers? No – we were all about the same in our engineering skills. So, what made the difference? The other young engineers were trying to show the boss they were better than the old guy while I was serving the old guy, treating him with respect, learning from him, helping him, and protecting him.

Here's the thing – you can't beat the old guy – if you try all you are doing is making him your enemy. An enemy who the boss is going to go to to ask about you! And those other young engineers never knew this happened.

Proverbs 27:18 - He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit, And he who cares for his master will be honored.

Proverbs 20:6 - Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, But who can find a trustworthy man?

Wise Men and References

How many of you assist adults in their ministries? Are you treating the leaders you serve this way? Did you know they talk about you? They comment on who is on time, comes faithfully, obeys quickly, completes their tasks fully and with high quality, has a respectful, positive attitude and who does not? – by the way these are the same things that all authorities, spiritual mentors, and technical experts value – they are characteristics of moral character.

Now God's ways are always for our benefit. So, in addition to becoming a wise man yourself (Proverbs 19:20 - Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.) here are some real benefits that will occur:

Proverbs 14:35 - The king's favor is toward a servant who acts wisely, But his anger is toward him who acts shamefully.

If you have acted wisely with those who mentor you and have authority over you they will grow to respect and admire you – even though most of them will never tell you. Because you have set yourself apart as someone special because of your behavior these people will tend to look for ways to help you – sometimes you will know about it – often it will happen behind the scenes without you ever knowing.

For example, when Dion's or Starbucks is considering hiring you the boss will look for people with good references. What are references? These are adults who the boss will talk to about you to see what type of person you are – and you need to know – they will not lie for you – they will tell the truth. If you have served well your spiritual mentor, your technical mentor, and someone who had authority over you you have a perfect set of references. These people will feel very comfortable talking about how impressive you are and what a great employee you would be. This happens with very few people. These references just moved you to the top of the list without you ever knowing.

In every new situation look at those in authority over you, look for the top technical people in areas you are interested in, and look for a spiritual mentor as people with wisdom that deserve to be served, cared for, treated with honor, respected, and obeyed.

Dictionary Definitions

Reproof – to express disapproval of something you did

Scoff – to speak about someone with contempt.

Humble – Lowly in station, rank, or condition; unpretentious, modest.

Pride – An undue sense of one's own superiority

Honor – High regard, respect, and esteem. High rank or position

Respect – to have deferential regard for, esteem – to treat with propriety and consideration. Regard for and appreciation of worth: honor and esteem.

Power – Ability to act, capability – the right, ability, or capacity to exercise control

Rebuke – to reprove sharply – a strong and authoritative expression of disapproval.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Walking With Wise Men*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 13:20, Proverbs 1:1-4, Proverbs 22:11, Romans 13:1-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 10:14, Proverbs 4:7, Proverbs 3:35 & 22:29, Proverbs 24:5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 23:9, Proverbs 3:7, Proverbs 20:3, Proverbs 26:18-19*

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QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Walking With Wise Men*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 6:23, Proverbs 15:31, Proverbs 10:8, Proverbs 10:26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 11:2, Proverbs 12:15, Proverbs 13:10, Proverbs 17:9 & 17:27*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Proverbs 25:6-7, Proverbs 27:18, Proverbs 20:6, Proverbs 14:35*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

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