



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Seeking Counsel From God's Word

PSALM 119 :24

JULY 20, 2010

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Seeking good counsel is something vitally important and necessary for those serving in the capitol. The governor has a cabinet to give counsel and help lead the various agencies of the state. He has a chief of staff and others to give him counsel regarding political and other issues. The Senate, House, and executive branch offices all have legal counsel to give advice. Committees have attorneys to advise on legal issues. Often in committee hearings experts are brought in from various fields to give advice and counsel regarding issues coming before the legislature. Those running for office may hire individuals or firms to help run their campaigns as they seek victory in elections. Yes, seeking counsel is certainly common in the world of politics and government.

Seeking good counsel is important and necessary for every one of us in our lives. We face questions of eternal consequence – Why am I here? What happens when I die? How can I be right with God? We need right answers to those questions. We face difficult and important decisions and need good counsel to help make the right choices. We all deal with trials and challenges and need help to endure and make it through them. The question is, where do we turn for good counsel? As we continue our studies in Psalm 119, today's verse makes it clear – we seek counsel from God and His Word:

Your testimonies also are my delight; They are my counselors. (vs. 24)

Before we consider this verse, let's once again read the next section and see what counsel we might gain from this wonderful Psalm:

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⁹⁷O how I love Your law!

It is my meditation all the day.

⁹⁸Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies,
For they are ever mine.

⁹⁹I have more insight than all my teachers,
For Your testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁰I understand more than the aged,
Because I have observed Your precepts.

¹⁰¹I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
That I may keep Your word.

¹⁰²I have not turned aside from Your ordinances,
For You Yourself have taught me.

¹⁰³How sweet are Your words to my taste!
Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴From Your precepts I get understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way.

From this verse we see that one great benefit we have from God's Word is **counsel**— how we might direct our affairs according to God's will. **“Your testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors”**. In the original Hebrew this is literally, “they are the men of my counsel”. If indeed David is the author of this Psalm, he was familiar with how a king would gather counselors around him to advise him. We can certainly picture our governor with his cabinet or political advisors gathered to get counsel and advice on affairs of state. The writer of Psalm 119 knew how important it is to seek counsel from God and His Word. As a political leader gathers advisors around him to help in times of difficult decisions, we can go to God's Word for good and wise counsel for our lives. The Bible itself constantly reminds us of the importance of seeking God's counsel and avoiding the counsel of the foolish and wicked. The book of Psalms opens with the statement that **“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked...”** (Ps. 1:1). The book of Proverbs is a collection of wise counsel and has much to say about the importance of seeking and heeding counsel.

A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel... Proverbs 1:5

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

This verse points out for us several important truths:

IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD AND LIVE IN A WAY PLEASING TO HIM.

Thomas Manton stated that “God is the scope and end of our lives and actions...”, and “God, being our chiefest good, must be our last end”¹. These words echo those of the first question of the well-known catechism: “What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever”. God is our creator so we are responsible and answerable to Him. The most important issues we face in life are how to make sure we right with Him and living in a way pleasing to Him.

WE NEED COUNSEL AND DIRECTION IN GOD'S WAYS.

The very idea of “counsel” implies there is information we need in order to make wise and proper decisions. As legislators and leaders you often

BIBLE STUDIES

INTERIM BIBLE STUDY

TUESDAY, JULY 20 * 8:00 A.M & 12:00 NOON * SENATE PRESIDENT'S CONFERENCE ROOM (M219) * BREAKFAST & LUNCH PROVIDED

West Virginia

Seeking Counsel from God's Word

seek out counsel regarding issues with which you may not be knowledgeable or familiar. If glorifying God and pleasing Him is our chief end, then is it certainly important to know how to do so. We may seek to please God on our own but Proverbs reminds us, "***The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel.***" (Proverbs 12:15). If we are to seek counsel in these all-important issues, we must recognize our need of God's revelation of Himself and His expectations of us.

WE FIND SUCH COUNSEL FROM GOD IN HIS WORD.

It is in the Scriptures God reveals to us what He is like and what He expects and demands from us. We see in the pages of the Bible a description of His absolute holiness and our own sinfulness before Him. We see in His law an account of how He demands that we live (recall our studies on the Sermon on the Mount). We are clearly shown how far each of us falls short from keeping His demands and so stand condemned as sinners before Him. We see how He has provided a way of redemption and forgiveness through Christ and His suffering and death on the cross. We find that the way of salvation is through nothing we do but through repentance and faith in what Christ has done for us. This indeed is the counsel we need regarding the questions of how we can be right with God and live in a way that is pleasing to Him.

THE COUNSEL WE FIND IN GOD'S WORD IS SUFFICIENT FOR ALL OUR NECESSITIES.

In His Word God has given us everything we need related to a right relationship with Him and living in a way that pleases Him. Peter encourages us that God "***...has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world...***" (2 Peter 1:3-4). We have previously touched on what is certainly the New Testament's clearest statement of the Scripture's purpose and sufficiency, 2 Timothy 3:16: "***All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...***" Notice how each of these terms can well be related to the idea of "counsel".

There are several words used in the New Testament that carry the idea of the counsel we can gain from God in His Word. We find the Word was given to "**warn**" and "**admonish**" (Colossians 1:28; 3:16). We find there are times we must undergo "**rebuke**": (1 Timothy 5:20). The Word is used to "**exhort**" us to change and grow to be more like Christ: (Titus 2:15). Sometimes we simply need to be "**reminded**" of the things we

have learned from Scripture (Romans 15:15; 2 Peter 1:12). We should note that God has given the responsibility of using the Word to counsel us in this way to the pastors and elders of the church. Paul challenges Timothy, a young pastor and Christian leader of the church in Ephesus to "***preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.***" (2 Timothy 4:2). An important part of seeking counsel from God's Word is making sure we place ourselves under the teaching and authority of the leaders of a good church that has a high view of Scripture and faithfully preaches and teaches the Word of God.

While the Scripture's primary purpose is to counsel us regarding the vital issues of redemption, salvation, and living a life pleasing to God, the Bible indeed gives wise counsel to legislators or leaders regarding many of the issues they face. It is the wise leader who would ask, "What does God and His Word have to say about this issue?" before voting or making a decision.

CONCLUSION

The Scriptures give us counsel on the most important issues with which every person must deal. The Bible informs of the true nature of our sinful condition and of our need for a Savior. We are warned of the coming eternal judgment of those who do not have their sins forgiven through repentance and faith in Christ and His work on the cross.

When do we need counsel? We may be **ignorant** of the truth regarding an issue or decision. In this case we need **instruction**. We may be **forgetful** of truths we have previously learned. In this case we need to be **reminded**. We may face difficult **trials and circumstances** and be tempted to despair and give up. Then we need **comfort and encouragement**. At times we may simply be **rebellious**, knowing God's truth yet determined to go our own way. If so we need to be **warned and rebuked**. All this we find when we seek counsel from God's Word.

How can you seek counsel from God's Word?

- Commit yourself to systematically read and study the Bible.
- Make sure you are in good church which faithfully preaches and teaches the scriptures.
- Develop relationships with people who can effectively counsel you from God's Word. This may be a pastor, elder, family member, or friend.
- Constantly ask yourself, "What does God and His Word have to say about this issue, decision, or problem in my life?"

¹ Much of this study adapted from sermon by Thomas Manton. *The Complete Works of Thomas Manton*. Vol. VI. Sermon XXV. P. 223