



GUIDELINES DAILY COMMENTARY ON LIVING WITH DR. HAROLD J. SALA

Subject: Knowledge, Wisdom

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WISDOM

If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault. James 1:5

Long before the age of computers, e. e. cummings, the English author and philosopher, asked the question, "With all our knowledge, what has happened to wisdom?" Another English writer, Samuel Johnson, described the lack of wisdom in his generation as a "mental disease." Centuries before, Solomon decried the lack of wisdom and then wrote, "A wise man will hear and increase in learning. And a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel" (Proverbs 1:5-6, NASB). Solomon then pictured wisdom as a person who walks through the streets crying out at the foolishness of those who refuse counsel and correction.

A prison official recently was talking about the number of well-educated men and women who were confined to institutions--college graduates who were brilliant, men and women with high I.Q.'s--but there was a missing ingredient: wisdom. They weren't in prison because they were stupid; but there was something intangible missing.

The superintendent said, "The intellectual achievement of the prisoners here is very high. We have men here who are capable of holding any position in the world; there is no task or project which they could not carry through to success." Nobody questioned the fact that they knew a lot. Knowledge, they had. But lacking was wisdom, as they wasted their lives away confined to a prison. One of the greatest tragedies in all of life is that of an empty, wasted existence. Another ingredient was missing--integrity, which affected their conduct, and without integrity there is no real wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom just are not the same thing.

Long ago the Apostle Paul came to the city of ancient Corinth on the banks of the gleaming Aegean Sea. He had just been in Athens, and there had debated the philosophers of his age. The experience was still fresh in his thinking as Paul approached Corinth, which was pretty much the same as Athens with the exception of the fact that the Corinthians were noted for their debauchery. To be called a Corinthian or "to Corinthianize" meant to live a debauched, licentious life, yet the Corinthians prided themselves as being wise men. Paul called it, "the wisdom of the world," and he contrasted it with the wisdom of God.

He contrasted the cross of Christ with men's wisdom, and described it as "foolishness" to those who were perishing but the power of God to those who believe. Wisdom, as Paul saw it, reflected a different point of view, one which takes into account the scope of eternity. This kind of wisdom isn't measured in terms of I.Q., or achievement, or intellectual prowess. It sees things which others don't see and puts values to things that others consider to be non-important.

Oswald Chambers had that kind of wisdom. Turning down a successful career as an artist, Chambers became a writer and a missionary. Instead of going to Oxford on a scholarship, he chose, rather, to go to a small Bible school where he committed his life to the cause of Christ. He died in Egypt before the age of 40, yet his book *My Utmost for His Highest* has become a classic, touching the lives of many around the world. He lived what he wrote. One of my favorite quotes of his is, "I am not many kinds of fools in one; I am one kind of fool, the kind of fool that believes and obeys God."

"If any of you lacks wisdom," wrote James, the half brother of Jesus, "you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault" (James 1:5). Yes, with all our knowledge, what's happened to real wisdom?

Resource reading: James 1