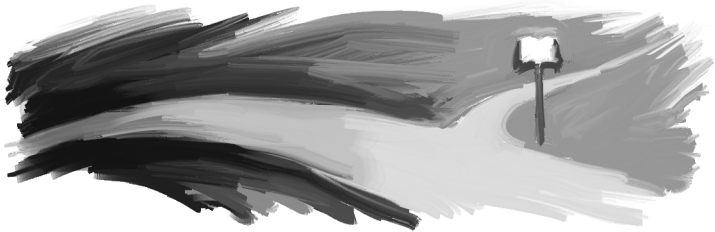


Daily Wisdom



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Pss. 19:7-14; 119:98-105; Prov. 3:13-16; 30:8, 9; Matt. 13:22; 16:26; Rom. 12:17, 18; 13:1-4.*

Memory Text: “From infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15, NIV).

Key Thought: Scripture provides us with a lot of wisdom for our daily lives.

As we've been studying, though the Bible deals with grand themes of universal importance, such as the great controversy, the fall of Lucifer, and the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, it's also a book of practical wisdom. In it, we are given guidance for daily life. Though the Bible might not be specific (how could it?), the Lord through His Word has given us wonderful principles that—if followed and obeyed—will make a great difference in how we live, because it will impact the choices we make.

How important that when confronted with choices—whether about family relationships, social relationships, work, money, or leadership responsibilities—we have divine guidance. And why not? The God who knows when a sparrow falls (*Matt. 10:29*) obviously cares about us and wants what's best for us; thus, we can be sure that if we are open to His leading, if we are willing to open His Word with reverence, submission, and faith, He will guide us.

This week we'll look more at the wisdom God shares with us through His Word.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 16.*

The Source of Wisdom

Everyone, every day, is confronted with choices, with decisions that must be made. As we all know, wrong choices are made every day too. Often selfishness is at the core of these choices, because—as fallen beings—we are, above all, selfish beings. How often, too, our wrong choices bring pain and suffering upon ourselves and others.

Think back about some wrong choices you have made and their dreadful consequences, not to berate yourself (there is forgiveness and healing at the Cross!) but simply to enforce the point that wrong decisions can be costly.

The good news is that God has given us His Word as a light and guide for us sinful, selfish beings (*Ps. 119:105*).

In the Bible we can find principles that can give us the wisdom we need to make the right decisions, particularly on moral issues.

Read Psalms 19:7-14, 119:98-105, Proverbs 3:13-16, and John 17:17. What promises and principles are found in these texts that can help us correctly make important moral decisions?

It's one thing to read about biblical principles; it's wholly another to follow them. As the psalmist said: "And in keeping of them there is great reward" (*Ps. 19:11*). The wisdom found in the Bible is useless unless applied. There are a lot of people out there who, though knowing the biblical principles, act contrary to them anyway. As Christians not only do we need to know what the Bible says; we need to obey what it says. Only then can we truly have the wisdom available to us through God's Word. A wise person isn't someone who simply has head knowledge or who can recite text after text; a wise person is someone who acts upon the truths given to us through Scripture.

What important decisions are you facing? Have you consulted the Scriptures as you face these decisions? Think through carefully the consequences of your choices. What Bible promises can you claim as you seek to make the right decision regarding your choices?

Social Wisdom

As humans we have our private lives, the lives we live at home behind closed doors; at the same time, we are also social creatures, living in a society with other people who do not share with us our privacy and intimacy.

Indeed, we are not only private persons but public citizens. Here, too, we can find wisdom in God's Word on how we can best live in our various communities.

In an earlier lesson, we looked at how obedience to the Ten Commandments could impact our family relationships. Read them again (*Exod. 20:1-17*) and ask yourself how following these principles will contribute to better social relationships, as well.

It has been estimated that throughout the centuries humanity has enacted more than thirty-two million laws, all in an effort to regulate human conduct. Often these laws are changed and abrogated in order to be kept up to date. Not so with the Ten Commandments; the principles behind them are unchanging and eternal, principles that can guide us in our private and public lives.

The Bible gives us wisdom regarding how we can best live as citizens within the larger community. Scripture provides us with more principles that, if followed, can make us better citizens and better witnesses for the Lord in the public arena.

What wisdom do you find in Jeremiah 29:7; Romans 12:17, 18; 13:1-4; and 1 Peter 2:13, 14, 17, that will help us better function in society? What other texts can you think of? As you read these verses, ask yourself: How am I best able to apply these words to the particular society in which I live?

Wisdom in the Workplace

Scripture acknowledges the reality and need of human work. Adam and Eve, as soon as they were created, were asked to dress and keep the Garden of Eden (*Gen. 2:15*). Even after the devastation of sin (*Gen. 3:17-19*), work was designed to be a blessing for humanity (*Eccles. 3:22*). Furthermore, the Bible recorded the teaching of Paul, who said that if a man refused to work, he had no right to eat (*2 Thess. 3:10*). Jesus was no less than 30 years of age when He emerged into public life (*Luke 3:23*), and the Bible says that people knew Him as a carpenter (*Mark 6:3*).

We know that obeying God's will is related to obeying His written Word. When we obey God's Word, we are obeying His will. But where the Bible reflects His general will, His will for our lives is specific. Though the Lord presents general principles on how to live, we can use those principles to guide us in the more specific areas of our lives, such as in our work.

Inasmuch as the Bible speaks about the need for humans to work, and that working is a major activity of human beings, it's no surprise that the Bible gives us wisdom regarding work.

What principles found in the following texts can apply to our work situation?

Eccles. 9:10

Matt. 25:14-30

Gal. 6:4

Col. 3:23, 24

The Bible shows some specific attitudes and characteristics of a good worker, which includes good use of time (*Matt. 25:14-28*), diligence (*Prov. 12:24*), integrity, and respect for authority (*Eph. 6:5, 6*). Most important, we should be honest in all our dealings, either as an employee or as an employer (*Prov. 11:1*).

What areas do you struggle with the most in your job, at least as far as following biblical principles? What's the reason for your struggles? What practical choices can you make to better follow biblical principles regarding work?

The Bible and Wealth

“Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonor the name of my God” (*Prov. 30:8, 9, NIV*).

Read the above text. What wisdom is found here that can help us all deal with the topic of money and wealth?

Time and again we read in the Bible about how dangerous wealth can be to the spiritual well-being of the followers of the Lord. In His divine foresight the Lord saw the coming apostasy of ancient Israel, saying, “and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat” (*Deut. 31:20; see also Deut. 32:15*), and in that state they will turn away from Him and serve other gods. At the same time, the Bible talks about the slothfulness and laziness that can lead to poverty, which can in its own way lead to sin and ruin. Both pitfalls need to be avoided.

Read Matthew 13:22, 16:26, 19:24, and 1 Timothy 6:10. What do these texts say about the potential dangers of wealth?

Money can do strange things to people. Unlike food, water, or rest, no matter how much money people make, it never seems enough. Sometimes, in fact, the richer people are, the greedier they become. Scripture, however, gives us principles that can help us better understand how we should relate to money and the gathering of wealth. In our desire for money, how crucial that we remember that in the end, the only treasure that lasts is the “treasure in heaven” (*Mark 10:21*).

What do you think the Bible means when it talks about “treasure in heaven”? What is this treasure in heaven, how do we get it, and how can focusing on it help protect us from the pitfalls of seeking too much treasure here on earth?

Wise Leadership

Let's face it: In this world, as it exists now, there will always be a place and a role for leaders of one kind or another.

Unfortunately, oftentimes people who rise to the level of leadership will seize the opportunity to serve themselves without thinking of the people they are leading. The Bible gives examples of unselfish and successful leaders such as Moses, as well as dangerous and immoral ones, such as King Herod.

Read Matthew 20:25-27. What important principle about leadership comes from these verses?

Look at Matthew 20:28. How did Jesus manifest this principle of a leader serving others in His own life? What can we take from His example for ourselves?

According to Robert Greenleaf, a servant-leader is one who is a servant first. "It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?"—*The Power of Servant Leadership* (San Francisco: Berrett-Kochler Publishers, Inc., 1998), p. 4.

If all leaders in the past two thousand years had followed the leadership style of Jesus, how different human history would have been!

Of course, leaders who are willing to serve are few and far between. But as Christians, we should be in the forefront of showing just how it can be done.

Are you in any kind of leadership role at all? If so, how well are you reflecting the principle about leadership revealed here today? How much selfishness and desire for power motivates you, in contrast to the desire to minister and serve?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, “How Shall We Search the Scriptures?” pp. 105–111; “Dig Deeper,” p. 119; “Practical Instruction in Labor,” pp. 309–318 in *Testimonies to Ministers*.

“The Bible contains all the principles that men need to understand in order to be fitted either for this life or for the life to come. And these principles may be understood by all.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 123.

“Those who study the Bible, counsel with God, and rely upon Christ will be enabled to act wisely at all times and under all circumstances. Good principles will be illustrated in actual life.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 43.

“The Bible unfolds truth with a simplicity and a perfect adaptation to the needs and longings of the human heart, that has astonished and charmed the most highly cultivated minds, while it enables the humble and uncultured to discern the way of salvation. And yet these simply stated truths lay hold upon subjects so elevated, so far-reaching, so infinitely beyond the power of human comprehension, that we can accept them only because God has declared them.”—Page 700.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ How can faithfulness in paying tithes and giving offerings help protect us against the dangers of greed?
- ❷ How seriously do we in our daily lives go to the Bible for wisdom in making decisions? As a class, talk about how, in a practical way, we can do that. Pick a few examples, such as Should I marry this person? Should I take this job? Should I move? How can you find in the Bible answers to these specific questions? Or can you?
- ❸ Discuss the question of leadership, and how easy it is for leaders to become selfish and use their power for selfish instead of selfless reasons. What have been some class members’ experiences in this area? What have you learned that could be of benefit to others?

A Better Way

by LUKA INDI

John and Nora Omanga live in southern Sudan, where they belonged to the major Protestant church in the area. One day Luka, a friend from their church, came to visit.

“I have found a better way,” he said. “I have found God’s true church.” John and Nora listened as Luka explained. “I wondered why our church kept Sunday and asked our priest. He said that in Greek the word *Sabbath* means Sunday. But now I have learned the truth.” Luka opened his Bible, written in the Moro language, and translated it for John and Nora.

The couple listened to Luka and wondered if what he said was true. The two men began studying the Bible together. John had no Bible of his own, so he tried to memorize what Luka read.

One day two Global Mission pioneers came to their area. They helped people work in their gardens in order to get to know them. When the pioneers learned of John and Nora’s interest in the Bible, they offered to study with them. Eagerly the couple agreed. Three months later John and Nora joined the Adventist Church.

The chief had given the pioneers permission to live in the area, but when the local priest learned what they were doing, he angrily demanded that the chief send the pioneers away. The chief had given his word and could not make them leave, but he threatened to cane anyone who became an Adventist.

When the chief learned that John and Nora had become Seventh-day Adventists, he cursed them, saying that deadly snakes would strike them.

One day as John worked in his garden, a large viper leaped at him. He managed to kill it before it struck him, but John remembered the curse and prayed earnestly for God’s protection.

On a hot sticky night some weeks later, the family slept outside their hut to avoid the mosquitoes that swarmed inside. Later, a noise awoke them, and they found their hut engulfed in flames. The family lost nearly everything, but they were safe. “For once we were glad that mosquitoes had driven us out of the house,” John said.

Recently believers in their area have received the first Bibles in Avokaya, their own language. Now they can explain Bible truths to others in their own language.

Our mission offerings support Global Mission pioneers and other evangelistic outreaches in Sudan and other countries around the world.

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