

February 27, 2022 am

Closer to God 2022 (7)

Sin – The Wisdom of this World

We are continuing to examine our theme for 2022, Drawing closer to God. We have talked about who God is, noting some of His qualities. In our last lesson, we began to study – that which draws us AWAY from God. Specifically, we defined what sin is. Today, I want to continue addressing the dangers sins by considering worldly wisdom and how that can draw us away from God.

I. The wisdom of this world

- a. Described as darkness
 - i. A few years back, we addressed shining as lights in the world. We contrasted the light of the gospel of Jesus with the darkness of this world. Darkness is one of the more powerful descriptions of sinful conduct.
 - ii. It is the antithesis of God. **1 John 1:5** notes that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. He has NOTHING to do with darkness. Therefore if we are governed by darkness, He will have nothing to do with us.
 - iii. **John 3:19-20** notes that men loved darkness and therefore hated the light.
 - iv. **Luke 11:34-35** notes *“The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light.”* (34-36)
- b. The wisdom of this world rejects God.
 - i. **Romans 1:20-25** – as Paul begins his letter to the Romans, he describes the depraved wisdom of this world. They reject God and exchange his truth for “the lie”. Professing to be wise, they became fools.
 - ii. Paul in **1 Corinthians 1-3** contrasted the wisdom of God with the wisdom of this world. There are several passages that address worldly wisdom:
 1. **1 Corinthians 1:18-25** speaks of the foolishness of the message of the cross to those of this world. Paul deals specifically with Jews and Gentile and how it is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to the Greeks
 2. **1 Corinthians 2:14** – the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, they are foolishness to him. And he cannot know them. THIS text is not saying it is impossible for the natural man to understand God’s word, but he often puts up a barrier that will not allow him to hear. It is like the hardened heart in the parable of the Sower. Satan comes and snatches the word away before it can do anything.
 3. **1 Corinthians 3:18-20**, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. We are living in a time of heightened “enlightenment”. We have access to so much knowledge and wisdom. With electronic media, we have access to virtually anything at the tip of our fingers. That can be a good thing, if we are wise in our pursuit of wisdom AND especially, if we seek the wisdom of God.
But what typically happens is when man’s wisdom increases, he begins to reason away God, His will and accountability. That is what we are seeing today.
 - iii. **James 3:13-18** – James contrasts the wisdom of this world with the wisdom of God. The wisdom of this world is selfish and often bitter. James described it as earthly (with worldly goals), sensual (appealing to our own lusts and fleshly desires), and demonic (of the devil). It is a wisdom that destroys and does great damage. We see it all around us.
 - iv. In these verses we can see the dangers of the wisdom of this world.
- c. We live in a world filled with knowledge and wisdom.

- i. Some of this wisdom and knowledge is good.
 1. We have access to great knowledge and education that gives us the ability to investigate and learn. With the internet and numerous other sources, it is at our fingertips. Wisdom can be a great thing. In fact, we ARE to pursue wisdom.
 - a. Proverbs 4:7 tells us that wisdom is *the principal thing*. Therefore, get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.
 - b. Solomon devoted the first 9 chapters to the value of wisdom.
 - c. James 3:17-18, AFTER describing the wisdom of this world, described the wisdom from above.
 - d. In summary, we NEED wisdom. It will lead us to God and give us the ability to better defend our faith.
 - ii. But not all wisdom is from above. As we have seen, there is worldly wisdom that rejects God.
 1. In the days of internet and social media, we must understand that not everything that is said is true. Just because a supposedly reputable website says something doesn't mean we should not investigate, nor that it is completely true. Far too many sources are highly biased and that needs to be taken into consideration.
 2. We find that in our school systems with their attempts to promote naturalism TO THE EXCLUSION of other alternatives. We see that in news media and resources that "conveniently" leave out certain facts that might alter one's perception of a particular occasion.
 3. The wisdom of this world says, "There is no God" or that He is powerless. Humanism is openly promoted with very little resistance or challenge. The wisdom of this world says that we don't need God, and especially His message to us. Like Paul said, the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. it says that all there is, is what you see – advocating naturalism. Much of what is presented by the "experts" of naturalism is flawed, inaccurate or extremely biased. It is often presented as facts rather than theory. But we are seeing the product of this teaching.
 4. When man says we are nothing but a highly developed animal, with nothing beyond this life, is it any wonder we have a generation that is acting like mere animals? The wisdom of this world says that you should do whatever you want. The wisdom of this world says, "he who has the most toys wins" The wisdom of this world says, "What's in it for me?" The wisdom of this world says that you can choose which laws to obey and explain away or justify those you do not like. The wisdom of this world provokes intolerance, especially toward those who dare to challenge their definitions of whatever they believe OR even the word tolerance itself (the world has a skewed definition of tolerance which, I believe, is a major contributing factor to the darkness around us. If you can silence open and honest discussion on any subject, you can lead the majority down whatever path you want to take them. We see too much of this today in our dark world! The wisdom of this world promotes ecumenicalism. The wisdom of this world says, "Believe what you want, and everyone else needs to accept it." This is true religiously.
 - e. The world calls good evil, and evil good – Isaiah 5:20-21. And many other things they teach and do. When a legislature can vote the murder a child at 9 months in its mother's womb, AND THE BILL is applauded, we ought to grieve.

II. **Dealing with the wisdom of this world:**

- a. Learn how the world thinks, without being enveloped by it – be alert to it. An example of this is our study of evidences. 1 Peter 5:8, 2 Corinthians 2:11, etc.
- b. Prepare to answer to the best of your ability - 2 Peter 3:15, 2 Timothy 2:15. Learn how to answer their ways, with scripture when possible, and ALWAYS by applying God's standards. That is what Jesus did. Use godly wisdom to live – Proverbs 2:10-13, *When wisdom enters your heart, And knowledge is pleasant*

to your soul, Discretion will preserve you; Understanding will keep you, To deliver you from the way of evil, From the man who speaks perverse things, From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; Be reminded of Colossians 4:5 – we are to walk in wisdom toward those who are outside. Ephesians 5:15 speaks of walking circumspectly (mindfully, alert) with wisdom.

Remember Jesus in Matthew 10:16 as He sent out His apostles to teach. He warns them that they are being sent out as sheep in the midst of wolves. *“Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

- c. We are to have no fellowship with it – Ephesians 5:11- do not live pursuing worldly wisdom. Proverbs 6:27, we cannot take fire into our bosom and not be burned.
- d. Cherish your brethren – 1 John 2:9-11 – we need each other in all of this. God intended brethren to be a source of strength and godly wisdom in a world that is often against us.
- e. Learn self-discipline – a foundational attribute. It takes self-discipline to not get caught up in the wisdom of this world. 1 Corinthians 9:25 (temperate); 2 Peter 1:6 – added to our faith, virtue and knowledge...
- f. Pray!!!! – James 1:5 – if anyone lacks wisdom Remember Jesus in the garden – Luke 22:40, 46 – watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.
- g. Finally, it goes without saying that dealing with the darkness around us starts with being a proper example – John 8:12, He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness,
1 John 1:5-6 - do not walk in darkness. If we say we love and have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, we lie.... We are not practicing the truth.
If one is not striving to live the gospel, all else is moot. You will be hiding your light under a basket, rather than putting it on a lampstand (Matthew 5:14-16).

This dark world has its own wisdom. It rejects God, His ways, and His people. If we are to draw closer to God, we need to beware of what that wisdom looks like, and WITH HIS wisdom make the distinction. Are you walking WISELY?