

## Wisdom From God's Word Jim Stephens

- **Thesis:** God's word can be your library, filled with the wisdom of the ages.
- **Text:** *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.* (Psalm 119:105 NIV)

*By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path.*  
(Psalm 119:105 The Message)

Review: What to do when it's hard to hear. How to deal with false messages and messengers.

*19 Don't suppress the Spirit, 20 and don't stifle those who have a word from the Master. 21 On the other hand, don't be gullible. Check out everything, and keep only what's good. 22 Throw out anything tainted with evil.* (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 The Message)

**Now I want to clarify something for you..**

### What Hearing from God isn't

- A way to do what we want to do and blame it on God.
- A way to avoid **the challenging responsibility of making hard decisions.**
- A way to control other people. **by playing the "Thus saith the Lord" card. "God told me to tell you..."**
- A way to isolate and insulate ourselves. **from the counsel and advice of wise people who love us and want to protect us from ourselves.**

### **Possibly omit this section: Unintentionally Intimidating Terminology**

Sometimes we Christians talk about the things we experience in "Christianese." We use expressions that have become common to us – an assumed understanding – but are hard to understand and confusing to people who don't have our experiences.

We also unintentionally intimidate younger Christian believers. Did you realize that? We use expressions like: "God told me" "The Lord spoke to me this morning"

**There was this guy back in Jesus people days, back when there was a lot of enthusiasm and not a lot of maturity. Leader of a little house church who believed that we all needed to hear from God.**

**"What's that Jesus?" Ok, right, I'll tell them. "Jesus is saying he wants us to all join hands around the circle."**

### **Our "Christianese" Terminology Can Become:**

- Terminology of exclusion.
- Terminology of intimidation.
- We may have the right motive, even have the theology right, but if we aren't careful with the terminology, we will be misunderstood by those with whom we most need to communicate clearly.

### **Consequences of the Terminology of Exclusion:**

- Exclusion of pre-Christians. "Hey, that's too weird. You can't expect me to believe that God talks to you!"
- Excluding ourselves from counsel and input. "God told me!" Well, I guess that just about ends the discussion, doesn't it. You miss so much wisdom. You miss so much of the richness of God's communication through others.

### **Consequences of the Terminology of Intimidation:**

- Intimidation of "normal people." (God doesn't speak to me like that. I don't suppose I'll ever be able to hear from God.)
- Excessive dependence on others. (I need to find someone to whom God speaks audibly and clearly and get them to direct my life.)

### **How can we avoid the Terminology of Exclusion and the Terminology of Intimidation?**

- What kind of terminology can we use that makes it easier for young believers to access hearing from God?
- What kind of terminology can we use so we don't completely alienate pre-Christians?
- What kind of terminology can we use so we don't close ourselves off from others?
- "God spoke to me" can become, "I felt impressed."
- "God showed me" can become, "This insight came to me. What do you think?"
- "God told me to tell you (and you better listen and pay attention!)" can become, "I'd like to share something with you. See if this makes sense."

**Let's avoid the terminology of exclusion and the terminology of intimidation.**

### **Introduction:**

Wouldn't it be great to have coffee in a little coffee shop every morning where you could sit for a while and someone would come along who has gone through the very situation you are experiencing and could sit with you for a while and talk about how to handle it? One morning it might be someone who has been through financial challenges and could tell you how to bring God's blessing and provision into your life. Another time it might be someone who has been in a difficult relationship and could advise you on how to bring forgiveness, healing, and growth into a situation you're

living with every day. The amazing thing is that in this little coffee shop you are going to meet someone who has walked the same path you're on, who knows the way through, and who can not only warn you of the dangers you may encounter, but can point out all the places of interest along the way!

Wouldn't it be great to be traveling on life's journey and at every section of the pathway, a guide steps up and says, "I'll walk this part with you. I've been over it before and I know all the pitfalls and also the points of interest."

We have just such a guide available to us – to each of us – for every day of our lives. The Holy Spirit inspired Bible. Everything we face in life is addressed in the Bible. The Bible is one of the most important ways God speaks to us.

*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 NIV)*

- The good news: Wisdom from God is available.
- The bad news: You don't have it yet (all the wisdom you need to navigate life).
- The solution: You must gather along the way the wisdom you need to live well and finish well.

## **WHERE DO WE GET WISDOM?**

**There are two kinds of wisdom from two locations – so choose wisely!:**

- (1) From below (earthly wisdom) – You don't want this!
- (2) From above (heavenly wisdom) – You want this one!

**So here are some ways to get heavenly wisdom..**

### **1. From personal experiences.**

There was in my hometown an old man who had a reputation as being very wise and prudent. One day he was asked, "Your life is a pattern of wisdom and right decisions. How do you consistently manage to do the right things?"  
He replied, "Good judgment."  
"And to what do you attribute your good judgment?"  
His reply, "Experience."  
"And to what do you attribute your experience?"  
He replied, "Bad judgment!"

- Wall hard, nose soft; Wall win, nose lose. Don't run into walls.
- You don't have enough time (or noses) to garner the wisdom you'll need from personal experiences.

## 2. From other people's experiences.

- Better to learn from external sources (or other people's experiences). That way I don't have to **suffer the consequences**. Bible: "The wise person sees the consequences ..."
- Consequence is a great teacher, but she will charge you an arm and a leg (our families; our marriages; our children; our future)
- Consequences demands that you make the mistake first, then you get the lessons. If you learn from other's experiences, you get the lesson without the consequences.
- How many of you have learned something valuable the hard way. **RAISE YOUR HANDS**. What if I learned from every one of your experiences? I could be wise beyond my years.
- How I learned from someone else's experiences – from a book ... (what if I had five of those? I could save years and learn tons.) What if I had a library of books?

## 3. From God's Wisdom Library – The Bible.

- God has provided that for us! A biblios (the word means 'library') – 66 books.
- When you read and learn, you will obtain the wisdom of the ages. You can walk through the desert with Moses. You can sit at the feet of David. You can hear the wisdom of Solomon.
- Paul wrote this about the Old Testament stories –

*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. (1 Corinthians 10:11 NIV)*

*6 The same thing could happen to us. We must be on guard so that we never get caught up in wanting our own way as they did. 11 These are all warning markers—danger!—in our history books, written down so that we don't repeat their mistakes. Our positions in the story are parallel—they at the beginning, we at the end—and we are just as capable of messing it up as they were. (1 Corinthians 10:6, 11 The Message)*

- The Spirit-breathed Word of God became the Bible. Spirit-quickened Words from the Bible become God's specific word to us. The Logos becomes the Rhema.
- God takes the truth that has been written and recorded in the pages of the Bible for centuries and makes it alive and immediate for the situation you're facing right this moment.

**Herein lies THE WISDOM OF THE AGES.**

- YOU can have all the wisdom necessary to become the father ... mother ... entrepreneur ... student ... the person God wants you to be and to live the life that God wants you to live – **a life without regrets.**
- I don't want you to have a life of regrets. To succeed in each season, to end up without regrets, requires a daily time with God and his Word.
- Spiritual maturity doesn't mean you get all your ducks in a row. It may look to others like you've got it together, but God just keeps probing deeper and deeper into your heart.

### **OK, I want to acquire wisdom from God's Word...**

- This important part of your life requires an investment of your time. Start where you are able to start. How can I gain 30 to 60 minutes per day to get my priorities right?
- One thing that can gain you some time most days: Don't watch TV. Watch TV programs. One hour a day less of sitting in front of the TV mindlessly clicking through the channels.
- Vegetating in front of the TV is like eating junk food for the soul. *"...Like eating cheap candy. Do you want junk like that in your belly?" (Proverbs 18:8 MSG)*
- **Ok, enough already. You've convinced me that I need God's wisdom and that it's available to me from the Bible..**

## **WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?**

### **1. Set the time and place.**

- Make it a daily time. Every day. If you miss a day, don't go back and try to make it up.
- What time is best for you? When are you at your best? What time of day do you have most control over?

### **2. Bring a Bible.**

- There are lots of good books you can read, but this is most important..
- Translations – such a rich variety available. Study Bibles for less than the price of a pair of shoes!
- Bible reading vs Bible study

### **3. Bring a pen. (and a high-lighter)**

- Mark up your Bible. The Bible is holy!
- Put it on the coffee table. If you put it on the coffee table the devil can't come in your house.

- This is not holy. This is ink on paper. What is holy to God is what you get off that ink on paper and put in your heart. God breathes it into your soul.
- When I underline something, I am agreeing with the Holy Spirit. I want to do everything I can to get stuff out of here and transfer it to my soul.

#### **4. Bring a reading plan.**

- If you don't follow a reading plan, you're just going to read your favorite parts of the Bible.
- Or you end up playing Bible Roulette.
- In either case, you don't get a comprehensive view of the word of God.
- My Verses for daily reading: These are like vitamins for the soul
- Daily Bible reading with a well-constructed plan is like eating balanced meals: OT, NT, Psalms, Proverbs.

#### **5. Bring a journal.**

- If you don't have one, we do. **SHOW A JOURNAL**
- **SHOW SOAP** (EXPLAIN IT) Choose one scripture – the most important verse – out of the entire three or four chapters.
- Example – **Read my journal entry from this morning – for tomorrow.**
- **SO PLEASE PICK UP A JOURNAL AND BEGIN DOING THIS.**

### **CLOSING**

How many times are you going to repeat this stuff? Haven't we heard it enough by now? Are you doing it? If each time Ken or I or someone else stands up here and says Ready, Set, Go and S.O.A.P. one more person gets a RSG Guide and a journal it's actually worth it. A life will be changed forever. Someone who is stuck will get traction, someone who is on the sidelines will get in the game, someone who is a spectator will become a player.

#### **Prayer:**