

Advice Worth Giving

I. Foolish Secular Advice

- **If there's a bad consequence, don't do it."**
 - The other side of this advice is "If it feels good, do it." This advice is basically designed to avoid suffering. However, quite often, what sounds like good advice to avoid difficulty often leads us in an even more dangerous direction.
 - It intentionally or unintentionally assumes retribution theology. However, this is legalism in its most pure form. This is both selfish and hedonistic.
 - It tends to value the temporal over the eternal. The eternal responsibility needs to outweigh the temporal "peace" we might think we're experiencing.
 - In Acts 21:10-12 God-loving, well-intentioned, kind, selfless people interpreted Paul's being imprisoned as a reason for Paul to not do what Paul knew the Lord wanted him to do.
 - There are many things that we know we must do, but that will result in persecution. But even if the advice is a practical suggestion, the motivation for the advice has to be the glory of God.
 - Motivation matters more than anything else. When it comes to giving advice, the motivation matters more than the advice does (as long as the advice is godly).
- **Agreeing with our children's position simply to convince them we're on their side.**
 - This is doubly bad when the child's position is clearly wrong and foolish and sinful. But it's also still bad if the only reason we're advising them to do something good is so that they'll like us more. (II Timothy 4:3)
 - Yes, they may hate you for giving them the advice they don't want to hear, but I need to tell you a personal story about this.
- **Providing our own opinion instead of God's.**
 - We absolutely need to ground all our actions, words, feelings, thoughts, desires, and beliefs in the inscripturated Word of God. If someone came up to us at any moment of the day and asked, "Show me from the Scriptures how what you're doing right now glorifies God," we should be able to.
 - The biggest reasons we can't show them from the Bible are that what we're doing doesn't glorify God, or one of the facets of what we're doing doesn't glorify God. Maybe it's the right "what," but not the right "how." Perhaps it's the right "what" and "how," but not the right "why" . . . the motivation.
 - If the advice I give could come from the Scriptures, but if the motivation is any of the aforementioned reasons, my advice is bad.

II. Wise Biblical Advice

- **Biblical Wisdom dictates we do what God commands.**
 - We must love our enemies. Love has to be patient and kind and humble and forgiving. We must be gracious and merciful. And those words don't get to mean anything we want them to mean. The Bible is abundantly clear how grace and mercy are to be practiced in our lives.
 - The Bible identifies over 650 unique sins. The New Testament has so many sanctification lists, and the vast majority of these characteristics are explained and illustrated in great detail in the pages of Scripture.
 - When your children have done a poor job on their chores, or they think they've been shot by Cupid, or they've gotten their first job, or it's time for vacation . . . there's biblical advice that must be given.

- **Biblical Wisdom dictates we must obey God regardless of the consequences.**
 - Jesus promises that there will be pain and persecution in this life. They hated Him, they're going to hate us. The kings rage against God; they will rage against us. In a world where people want to destroy the Bible and all Christians, we aren't going to be the cool kids. But the blessing that comes from following Christ isn't always temporal.
 - Yes, the Lord promises peace and joy and contentment and gratitude. He also promises to meet our needs and answer our prayers according to His will, and He delights to give us good things, but we look for a future city . . . a spiritual realm where God will rule for all eternity. We're living for our Father and the joy of worshipping Him perfectly in heaven.
- **Biblical wisdom dictates that we will have to reject other's advice.**
 - People will give us foolish secular advice. We can't accept it just to play nice. If it contradicts God's Word, we must reject it.
 - People will give us poorly motivated biblical sounding advice. This too must be rejected because God requires that we do all to His glory—not simply follow legalistic requirements for our own best interest.
 - People may give us well-motivated, but biblically inaccurate advice. This may be because of a poor interpretation of Scripture. It may be an accurate interpretation, but a wrong application in the current situation. This advice must also be rejected.
- **Biblical wisdom dictates that we humbly accept biblical reproof.**
 - Not only must we teach our kids to reject lies and the mostly-truths that aren't truly founded in God's revealed will, but we must also teach them to humbly grapple with the Scriptures when they're reprovved by someone with an open Bible.
 - The most well-intentioned get things wrong. It's so easy for us to misread and misapply the Scripture. I might be right and the one reproving me wrong. But they may be right, and I'm wrong. How can we know? We need to be like the Bereans to diligently read, study, mediate on, memorize, and apply the Scriptures. We need to lean on those who have gone before. We need to faithfully interpret the text with the hermeneutic it demands.
 - This is a huge work, one which requires the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It's nothing we can do by ourselves. That's why we have to be humble and careful.
- **Biblical wisdom dictates that we need to follow our own advice.**
 - If your advice to your kids is so valuable . . . why don't you follow it? That's hypocrisy.
 - That also means that our "good" advice to them was pragmatic and a result of our own self-worship. That makes that advice inherently bad and not Christ-honoring . . . no matter how good it may be on the outside.
 - And our kids see this. They have no desire to take the advice you refuse for yourself. They have no wish to submit to a hypocrite. That doesn't make them right to disobey what is—on the surface—Christ-honoring advice, but it's a temptation we thrust before them.
 - Of course, our biggest motivation for taking our own biblical advice must not be so that our kids will respect us. It needs to be because God deserves it. We should work to worship Him and please Him and submit to Him for no other reason than He is our great God.
 - Our kids respecting us will simply be the icing on the cake.
- Our kids need advice worth giving. Stop tossing at them the self-worshipping, superficial, humanistic, manipulative drivel of the world. Instead, offer them the truth of Scripture regardless of the consequences. Teach them to reject lies, and yet remain humble enough to test all advice by the Word. And then if the advice you're offering your kids is worth giving . . . then follow it yourself.