

life groups' study guide

wisdom – proceed with caution - rehoboam



Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.

Introduction

For many years, the “Dear Abby” syndicated newspaper column was the most widely-read advice column in the US. Each day, one or two people seeking advice were treated to some straightforward, common sense from the legendary columnist. Here are some examples taken from her book, The Best of Dear Abby :

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend is going to be 20 years old next month. I'd like to get him something nice for his birthday. What do you think he would like? CAROL

DEAR CAROL: Never mind what he would like. Get him a tie.

DEAR ABBY: Our son was married in January. Five months later his wife had a 10-pound baby girl. They said the baby was premature. Tell me, can a baby this big be that early? WONDERING

DEAR WONDERING: The baby was on time, the wedding was late.

DEAR ABBY: What inspires you most to write? TED

DEAR TED: The Bureau of Internal Revenue.

DEAR ABBY: I am forty four years old and would like to meet a man my age with no bad habits. ROSE

DEAR ROSE: So would I.

Discussion

[Q] What is best advice you were ever given?

[Q] Who gave the advice?

[Q] Do you ask for the advice?

[Q] Did you heed the advice?

[Q] Is there one piece of advice which you were given that, in hindsight, you wish you had taken? What was it? Why did you choose to ignore it?

Bible Study

Read 1 Kings 12: 1-24

Rehoboam has been chosen to succeed his father, Solomon, on the throne of Israel (vs 1-2)

The people make a request of Rehoboam (vs 3-4)

- What is the request?
- Does it seem reasonable to you?
- What did they offer as a part of their request? (vs 4)

Rehoboam responds (vs 5)

- What was his response?
- Why does he delay three days for his response?
- Was this delay a good idea, in your opinion? Why or why not?

King Rehoboam seeks guidance and counsel – first from elders who served his father (vs 6-8)

- What advice did they give Rehoboam?
- What consequence do they foresee for heeding this advice?
- How does Rehoboam respond?
- Is Rehoboam wise to seek many counselors?

The king is given conflicting advice (vs 8-11)

- Whom does the king seek for additional advice?
- Do his young advisors foresee consequences to their advice, as the older counselors do?
- Could the lack of foresight be due to age and/or experience?

The king weighs the advice and makes a decision (vs 12-15)

- What does Rehoboam decide?
- What is lacking in his decision?
- What are the consequences of his decision? (vs 16-24)
- How many people are affected by the decision? For how long?

Application

When faced with a decision, we have several options and challenges:

1. To seek advice, or act on our own
2. If we seek advice, to choose our counselors
3. To discern the wise path among differing advice

The book of James gives us a promise that if we ask, God will prove wisdom (1:5)

In James 3: 13-18, he outlines how we can begin to recognize true wisdom.

- What signs does James offer for evidence of true wisdom? (vs 13)
- What do you think is meant by “the gentleness of wisdom”?

The wisdom of the world is described in vs 14-16

- What traits are listed that describe worldly wisdom? (vs 14)
- Did Rehoboam and his young advisors demonstrate some of these characteristics?
- How does Paul describe those seeking only earthly things in Phil 3:19?

In James 3:15, he describes earthly wisdom as secular, sensual and demonic.

- Sensual – “if it feels good, do it”
- Secular – without reference to, or acknowledgment of, God
- Demonic – motivated by the Devil (whom Jesus described as the father of lies)

We see these three elements in the first temptation recorded in the Bible (Gen 3: 1-6)

- How are these three elements used today in tempting us to choose the wisdom offered by the world over godly wisdom?

Like Rehoboam’s elder advisors, James provides a glimpse at some of the consequences of our choices.

- What are the outcomes James lists in 3:16?
- What are the contrasting results of wisdom from above (vs 17-18)?
- How can we use these contrasting lists in helping us discern:
 1. Our choice of advisors?
 2. The wisdom of the advice the offered?

Are you facing a decision which you need to be seeking wise counsel? What steps will you take in response to this lesson? Seek prayer and further study. (Read Proverbs 2 for an additional template to help discern true wisdom.