

Sermon 53: Getting Godly Wisdom: Matthew 7:1-8

Text: Matthew 7:1-8 "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened..."

The focus of our study: 7:7-8 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened..."

Summary: God wants His children to walk in godly wisdom.

- **The last several weeks we talked about discernment:**
 - This is the ability to determine what is right, wrong, and best according to God's standard in complex situations.
 - God calls us to be discerning.
- **How do we practically walk in wisdom?**
 - **We need to consider three words from this passage:** "Ask, seek, and knock..."
 - **We need to consider them alongside Psalm 37, Proverbs 2, and James 1.**

Truth 1: Walking in wisdom starts with asking God for it: 7:7 "Ask, and it shall be given you..."

- **Proverbs 2:1-7** "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding...Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous..."
- **James 1:5** "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him..."
 - **Observation 1: It is a command.**

- **Observation 2: It starts with the assumption that we need wisdom from outside of ourselves.**
- **Observation 3: It assumes that we understand that God is the source of this wisdom.**
- **Observation 4: It comes with a comforting promise.**
 - **Matthew 7:** "It shall be given you..."
 - **Proverbs 2:** "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God... He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous..."
 - **James 1:** God "Giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him..."

Truth 2: Those who ask God for wisdom must be willing to do their part to diligently seek it in the right places and in the right way: 7:7

"Seek, and ye shall find..."

- **Proverbs 2:4-5** "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God..."
- **Proverbs 2:7** "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous..."
- **James 1:6-7** "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways..."
 - **Observation 1: Seeking implies that there is a process that involves both time and effort.**
 - **Proverbs 2:** Seek her as silver.
 - **Proverbs 2:** Search for her as for hid treasures.
 - **James 1:** Ask in faith, nothing wavering.
 - **Observation 2: We need to consider other scriptures to understand what this means:**
 - **Some common misunderstandings about wisdom:**
 - **A strictly worldly approach:**
 - Follow your heart.
 - Do what works.
 - Do what makes you feel good.
 - Act as if you are the master of your own fate.
 - Act as if opportunities are the result of luck.
 - **A well-meaning but naïve Christian approach:**
 - Pray and God will give you a mystical peace.
 - Pray and look for proof texts to guide your decision.
 - Ask a lot of people and follow their advice.
 - Put out fleeces so God can give you confirmations.

- **A biblical approach:**
 - **First: Ask God to help you understand the implications of His word:**
 - **Psalm 119:18** "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law..."
 - **James 1:6** "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering..."
 - **Second: Regularly study the scriptures so God's word is shaping your thinking, refining your interests, and motivating your passions:**
 - **Psalm 119:105** "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path..."
 - **Psalm 119:130** "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple..."
 - **Third: Develop a thoroughly biblical worldview about life:**
 - **1 Corinthians 10:31** "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God..."
 - **Philippians 1:20-21** "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain..."
 - **Fourth: Consider the specific principles that have bearing on the decisions you need to make:**
 - **Psalm 119:59-60** "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments..."
 - **Proverbs 3:5-7** "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil..."
 - **Proverbs 4:26** "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established..."

- **Fifth: Learn to discern the difference between irrational fear, godly concerns, and a troubled conscience:**
 - **Irrational Fear:**
 - **Fear of man: Proverbs 29:25** "The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe..."
 - **Fear of the unknown: Ecclesiastes 11:4-6** "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good..."
 - **Godly concern: Proverbs 22:3** "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished..."
 - **A troubled conscience: Romans 14:20-23** "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin..."
- **Sixth: Seek the input of several godly people:**
 - **Proverbs 11:14** "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety..."
 - **Proverbs 15:22** "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established..."

- **Proverbs 24:6** "By wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety..."
- **The value of godly counselors:**
 - God can use them to reinforce your unstated concerns.
 - God can use them to help you work through your fears.
 - God can use them to help you see things you are not able to see because of inexperience or blind spots.
 - God can use them to embolden you in a course you are apprehensively pursuing.
 - God can use them to help you prepare for potential challenges that are a normal part of life.
- **A warning about counselors:**
 - Do not seek out people who will tell you what you want to hear.
 - Do not seek out people who are less experienced than you.
 - Be cautious about people who have a potential conflict of interest.
 - Do not seek people like those we are warned about in **Psalm 1**.
- **Seventh: Hold your pursuits gently:**
 - **James 4:14-15** "Ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that..."
- **Eighth: Learn to trust God with what you cannot control:**
 - **Psalm 37:3** "Trust in the LORD, and do good..."
 - **Psalm 37:5** "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass..."
 - **Psalm 37:7** "Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not..."
- **Observation 3: It comes with a comforting promise:**
 - **Matthew 7:7** "Ye shall find..."

- **Proverbs 2:4-5** "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God..."
- **Proverbs 2:7** "He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous..."

Truth 3: Godly wisdom compels decisive action: 7:7 "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you..."

- **Observation 1: Wisdom is not just about knowing what is right, it is about applying that knowledge in action: Ecclesiastes 11:4-6** "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good..."
- **Observation 2: The outcome of a wise decision rests in God's hands, not ours:**
 - **Ecclesiastes 11:** "Thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.
 - **Proverbs 3:6** "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths..."
 - **Proverbs 4:26** "Let all thy ways be established..."
 - **Psalms 37:5** "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass..."
- **Observation 3: Walking in godly wisdom is another way of saying walk by faith not by sight.**
 - We must lean on His instruction.
 - We must trust in His providence.
 - We must be willing to take steps without absolute clarity on the outcome.

Applying this text:

- Take great comfort in your God.
- Take your duty to be in the scriptures seriously.
- Allow the scriptures to shape your thinking, refine your interests, and motivate your passions.
- Do not walk alone.
- Choose your influences wisely.
- Do not be afraid to take the critical steps you are called to take in life.
- Leave the unknowns in God's good hands.