

Lesson 2

Opportunity, Experience, Choices

Embracing God-Given Wisdom

Introduction

Sometimes, we lead, sometimes we follow, and sometimes, we simply cross paths. With each of these experiences, we find the opportunity to serve God. The choices we make regarding how we respond to the opportunity become the choices that define us.

God's word instructs us how best to make good and wise choices, rather than poor or foolish ones. In Luke 10:29-37, we have the story of a man who was beaten, robbed, and left for dead along the side of the road. Three other men, each in their own time, crossed paths with the one beside the road. Each one of the three made a choice as to how they would respond. Only one of them made the wise choice in his service to God.

One great truth about getting older is wrapped in the phrase "older and wiser." Sadly, another well-known phrase, "There's no fool like an old fool," is also an appropriate truth. One of the greatest values of aging is the continued opportunity to improve by making better and wiser choices.

The books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are two books written by the wise man Solomon. In those writings, he shares his own experiences, choices, and consequences, along with his observations of others as well. He concludes his writings with this piece of wise counsel:

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Activities

1. Define *wisdom*.
2. Define *free moral agent*.
3. Related Bible Verses: *Read the following verses and be prepared to share how you identify, or relate specifically to one of them:*
 - g. James 3:13, 17
 - h. Ephesians 5:15-16
 - i. Job 12:12
 - j. Ecclesiastes 2:26

k. Colossians 4:5-6

Key Points for Discussion

1. Wisdom is not gained from reading about something, but rather by . . .
2. What keeps us from making good choices and gaining wisdom?
3. As vessels of wisdom, how might we spiritually make a difference with those we interact?
4. What are your thoughts on this passage that reveals God's expectations for us to share our wisdom: *If I say to the wicked person, 'You will surely die,' but you do not warn him – you don't speak out to warn him about his wicked way to save his life – that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood (Ezekiel 3:18).*

Applications

1. What are some of your life experiences or choices that have helped you to encourage or help others?
2. How many times should we have to repeat the same bad choices before we start making the right choice?

My Prayer for Making Better Choices When Opportunities Arise

Dear Lord . . .

Today's Bible Verses

- James 3:13 - Who among you is wise and understanding? By his good conduct he should show that his works are done in the gentleness that comes from wisdom.
- James 3:17 - But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense.
- Ephesians 5:15-16 - Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil.
- Job 12:12 - Wisdom is found with the elderly, and understanding comes with long life.
- Ecclesiastes 2:26 - For to the person who is pleasing in his sight, he gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and accumulating in order to give to the one who is pleasing in God's sight. This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind.
- Colossians 4:5-6 - Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.