



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

LIVING WISELY OR FOOLISHLY

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Corinthians 3:19-23 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURES: 1 Corinthians 2:14 | Hebrews 9:27
James 3:13-17

► SUMMARY

We all make countless decisions during a lifetime, and as a whole, they determine whether we live wisely or foolishly.

The most important factor is whether or not we seek the Lord's guidance in our choices. Those who base their decisions on their own reasoning, feelings, and desires, or on other people's advice, will live foolishly because they've ignored the only true source of wisdom—almighty God. Too many people forget that choices have consequences. Our culture wants to live in the here and now, without regard for the eventual outcome of those choices. But beginning in the Garden of Eden, God has clearly told us that negative consequences always follow foolish, self-willed decisions.

► SERMON POINTS

God should have priority in your decision-making process.

Whenever you're faced with a choice—whether major or minor—always ask yourself: What is the wisest thing to do? God wants us to seek His wisdom and live the best possible life without suffering the consequences of foolish choices.

The Scriptures distinguish between two different kinds of wisdom (1 Cor. 3:19-23). The people of Corinth, Greece, were considered some of the smartest in the world, but God says their wisdom is foolishness to Him. He catches them in their craftiness and sees right through their foolish reasonings. Man, apart from God, can boast in nothing.

True wisdom is seeing life from God's viewpoint and responding on the basis of what He says in His Word.

This means that those who say they have no time for the Bible have automatically chosen a foolish lifestyle. They are deluding themselves by thinking they can live happily, peacefully, and successfully without the Word of God. But the Scriptures are the only way they'll discover God's wisdom regarding matters that concern them.

Just consider the vastness of the Lord's wisdom. He is omniscient, which means He has infinite knowledge about everything. Nothing surprises Him because He sees yesterday, today, and tomorrow with perfect clarity. Unlike us, He's never had to revise His Word. He knows each of us perfectly and has complete understanding of our every need.

On the other hand, man's wisdom is based on what he sees, feels, hears, or thinks. Even the most brilliant people are limited in their knowledge. In fact, their intelligence is often the barrier between them and true wisdom. Knowledge has to do with the mind, while wisdom is a matter of the heart and the spirit. That's why it's possible to be very smart in some areas of life, yet unwise in others.

Those who choose to live apart from God must rely on themselves for their own security. However, no matter how well-prepared they are, unexpected circumstances can quickly destroy their illusion of safety. The only genuine, eternal security is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ. First Corinthians 3:23 tells believers, "You belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God." That's genuine and lasting safety. Nothing and no one can touch us apart from the Lord's knowledge and will. Although we

may not always understand why He allows heartaches, tragedies, or burdens in our lives, we can trust that His way is always best and that He'll walk with us through the hardships.

When we belong to God, we're set apart for Him. As we let Jesus live His life through us, He faithfully guides us in every decision. Human knowledge and understanding are like a tiny grain of sand compared to a beach full of God's wisdom. There's no need to be anxious and fearful about what could happen because we can sleep soundly each night knowing that the Lord is sovereign over all the events of our lives.

God wants to share His wisdom with His children. He knows we need His help to live wisely because our understanding is so limited. When He leads the way, we can walk through heartaches and hardships beyond our natural ability to endure. As we listen and obey Him, He will faithfully lead us one step at a time. However, if we plow through the trials without the Lord, we'll get ourselves in trouble.

Worldly wisdom sees life from man's perspective.

People who choose this route think happiness is found in position, knowledge, talent, and possessions. However, none of these things will get them into heaven. In James 3:15, we see three adjectives to describe this type of wisdom.

- **Earthly.** It's limited to human reasoning and accomplishments. Although humans have made tremendous advances in science, they still haven't learned to get along with each other. What they need is a heavenly source of wisdom to lead them in all they do.
- **Natural.** Inside every person is a natural element that wants its own way. That's why we struggle with temptation and sometimes resist obeying God. It's that sensual part of us that relates to the fallen nature.
- **Demonic.** The root of worldly wisdom is found in

Satan himself. Throughout history, he's tried the same deception he used on Eve—you're smart, you can handle it, you don't need God.

What is the wise way?

To live wisely we must seek the right counsel. We should never base our decisions on what everyone else is doing or what they think is best. Instead, we need to find out what God says. After all, He's the one who knows everything and has all the power to handle the issues that are concerning to us. If we listen and wait for His instructions, we can be sure that we'll discover His best for our lives. When His directions don't make sense to us, or to anyone else, we must remember that all human understanding can't equal God's wisdom. We'll never go wrong if we believe and obey Him.

There are really only two choices in life. We are either living in God's wisdom or foolishly relying on human understanding. James 3:17 says, "Wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy." That's the kind of life we want to live, especially considering the alternative. Earthly, natural, and demonic wisdom is full of jealousy, selfish ambition, disorder, and evil (James 3:15-16).

► RESPONSE

- On what basis do you routinely make your decisions? Are you more likely to go with what makes sense to you or ask friends for advice rather than asking God what He would have you do?
- Do you think seeking the Lord's direction is only important for major decisions? How would your relationship with Him change if you relied on His guidance for small, seemingly inconsequential choices?
- Are you learning to know and understand the Lord through His Word so you'll see His perspective on your issues and choices?

To purchase this message on CD or DVD, please visit store.intouch.org or call 1-800-789-1473.
To download these Sermon Notes, visit intouch.org/sermonnotes.

