

CONSULTING GOD'S WISDOM

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The fact is, when we take charge of a situation without consulting the wisdom of God, we always make a mess of it. Relationships get convoluted, hearts get broken, unfair and unkind words are spoken, egos are crushed, waves of doubt trouble us, distrust creeps in, guilt takes up residence, and emotions go haywire. Thangs ain't purty. – Thelma Wells

Sounds like life, doesn't it? James 1 says, "If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you." God's wisdom is available to us; all we have to do is ask. And yet, we rarely do. If you're anything like me, too often you just plunge ahead, move too quickly, think you've got it all figured out – and then have to go and pick up the pieces. We may have brains, energy, creativity, even the courage of our convictions – but wisdom comes only from God. We're usually too proud and moving too fast to even think to ask for it.

As a pastor, I spend a lot of time in one-on-one counseling with folks who are having troubles in one area of their lives or another. I can almost never solve the problem. I generally can't fix what's wrong. I very rarely tell anyone exactly what to do. But I can listen, and care, and challenge, and encourage. And even that much can't be done without God's wisdom.

However, I can't imagine stopping a conversation to pray, even silently, to ask God for wisdom. Certainly the Spirit can give us specific words to say at specific times; that's a Biblical promise. But I believe when we're paying attention, God gives us wisdom even when we don't stop the world to ask for it. And by the time we come to a place where God's wisdom is needed, it's already there: it's who we are.

This happens when we read scripture. It happens when we pray, either during a set-aside quiet time or in the car doing errands. God gives us wisdom when we're open and honest with him, and we give him access to every part of our hearts and lives. God expresses his wisdom through other people who love him; we just need to listen and hear. God teaches us wisdom through the people in our lives who are hard to love – even those who hurt us or anger us. There is wisdom in the cross; in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And there's enormous wisdom in really believing and receiving God's grace, in living a life of gratitude and humility.

Thangs definitely ain't purty without God's wisdom. As I said, we're smart and energetic, but operating in our own strength and trusting in our own human wisdom leads to messed-up relationships, deep wounds, and discouragement. God's wisdom is for everyone. Don't wait till it's an emergency. Look for God's wisdom in everyday things, in everyday relationships with people, in God's Word. We don't become wise overnight, but when we're open to the Spirit and paying attention, God gives us all the wisdom we need for now and forever.