

GIVING AND RECEIVING ADVICE – GOD’S WAY

TONIGHT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING WE ALL DO, GIVE ADVICE. JUST AS WE GIVE IT TO SOME ONE ELSE, WE ALSO RECEIVE ADVICE. THE ADVICE WE GIVE CAN BE HELPFUL OR HARMFUL DEPENDING ON THE STANDARD YOU ARE USING. THERE IS ONE SURE WAY TO ALWAYS GIVE THE RIGHT ADVICE AND THAT IS TO GIVE SCRIPTURALLY SOUND ADVICE. THE TITLE OF TONIGHT’S TALK IS GIVING AND RECEIVING ADVICE – GOD’S WAY.

IT IS PART OF THE NATURE OF MAN TO WANT SOMEONE ELSE TO TELL HIM WHAT TO DO, FOR THEN THE NEED FOR MAKING A DECISION IS OFF HIS SHOULDERS. IF SOMETHING SHOULD GO WRONG, HE CAN ALWAYS BLAME SOMEONE ELSE! (EXAMPLE: ADAM, EVE, AND THE SERPENT). ALSO MANY TIMES WHEN PEOPLE SEEK COUNSEL FROM ANOTHER, THEY ARE ACTUALLY SEEKING TO CONFIRM THEIR OWN DESIRES. IF THE COUNSEL THEY ARE GIVEN CONCURS WITH WHAT THEY WANT TO DO ANYWAY, THEY TAKE IT AS A CONFIRMATION.

PRINCIPLES OF GIVING ADVICE

- A. UNDERSTAND A PERSON’S SITUATION BEFORE GIVING ADVICE. WE SOMETIMES GIVE PEOPLE EXCELLENT ADVICE ONLY TO LEARN THAT IT DOES NOT APPLY TO THEM AND IS NOT HELPFUL. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IS FOUND IN THE BOOK OF JOB, WHERE JOB’S THREE FRIENDS OFFERED WHAT THEY THOUGHT WAS SOUND ADVICE, BUT IT WASN’T BECAUSE THEY REALLY DIDN’T UNDERSTAND THE REASON FOR JOB’S SUFFERING. THEY THOUGHT THAT JOB HAD SINNED AGAINST GOD AND WAS BEING PUNISHED, BUT JOB WAS SUFFERING BECAUSE GOD ALLOWED SATAN TO TEST HIS LOYALTY TO HIM.**

- B. WE MUST GIVE GODLY ADVICE. OUR ADVICE MUST BE BIBLICALLY BASED, CHRIST CENTERED, AND HOLY SPIRIT LEAD. THIS IS MOST IMPORTANT. THERE IS PROBABLY NO AREA THAT MORE ADVICE IS GIVEN THAN THAT WHICH DEALS WITH PROBLEMS IN OUR MARRIAGES. ALL TOO OFTEN WHEN SOMEONE SHARES WITH US ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS AND THEIR PROBLEMS SEEM SEVERE ENOUGH, THAT WE MENTION TO THEM THE “D” WORD, DIVORCE. WE ARE QUICK TO SAY “MAN IF IT WAS ME I WOULD SAY, SEE YA.” THE PROBLEM IN GIVING THAT ADVICE IS THAT SCRIPTURALLY THERE ARE ONLY TWO INSTANCES WHERE DIVORCE IS PERMITTED, I.E. WHEN THERE IS ADULTERY INVOLVED AND WHEN AN UNBELIEVER**

LEAVES A BELIEVER. THE TERM COMMONLY HEARD NOW-A-DAYS, "IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES" IS NOT IN THE BIBLE, AND WE SHOULD NOT GIVE THAT ADVICE TO ANY ONE UNLESS IT MEETS THE BIBLICAL CRITERIA THAT I STATED EARLIER. SIMILAR, WE ARE SO QUICK TO OFFER A BROTHER ADVICE ABOUT LEAVING A JOB, WHEN IN FACT THIS COULD BE A SITUATION THAT GOD HAS ALLOWED TO HAPPEN FOR THAT PERSON TO EITHER BECOME OR GROW STRONGER SPIRITUALLY.

THE MAIN REASON WE SHOULD ONLY GIVE BIBLICAL ADVICE IS THAT WE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD. WE SHOULD NEVER GIVE ADVICE TO SOMEONE THAT WOULD IN SOME WAY CAUSE THEM TO SIN AGAINST GOD. BEFORE YOU SPEAK TO A FELLOW BROTHER, PRAY BEFORE YOU SPEAK.

PRINCIPLES OF RECEIVING ADVICE

A. ADVICE FROM GOD

- (1) SEEK ADVICE FROM GOD FIRST. (PROV. 3:5-6). WHEN WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT DECISION TO MAKE, WE SOMETIMES FEEL THAT WE CAN'T TRUST ANYONE – NOT EVEN GOD. GOD KNOWS WHAT IS BEST FOR US. WE MUST NOT BE WISE IN OUR OWN EYES. WE SHOULD BE WILLING TO LISTEN TO AND BE CORRECTED BY GOD'S WORD AND WISE COUNSELORS. WE MUST TRUST HIM IN EVERY CHOICE WE MAKE. WE MUST MAKE GOD A VITAL PART OF EVERYTHING THAT WE DO; THEN HE WILL GUIDE US BECAUSE WE ARE WORKING TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES.**
- (2) DON'T SEEK ADVICE FROM GOD IF YOU ARE GOING TO IGNORE IT. REAL LOVE FOR GOD IS SHOWN NOT BY MERELY ASKING FOR DIRECTION, BUT BY FOLLOWING THAT DIRECTION ONCE IT IS GIVEN.**

B. ADVICE FROM OTHERS

- (1) WE MUST EVALUATE ADVICE GIVEN TO US BY OTHERS. TO EVALUATE ADVICE, ASK IF IT IS REALISTIC, WORKABLE AND CONSISTENT WITH GOD'S WORD. DETERMINE IF THE RESULTS OF FOLLOWING THE ADVICE WILL BE FAIR, MAKE IMPROVEMENTS, AND GIVE A POSITIVE SOLUTION OR DIRECTION. SEEK COUNSEL FROM THOSE WHO ARE MORE EXPERIENCED AND WISER. ADVICE IS ONLY HELPFUL IF WE**

EVALUATE IT WITH GOD'S STANDARD IN MIND. 1 THESS. 5:21, "PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST TO THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

- (2) DON'T BE TOO QUICK TO REJECT ADVICE YOU DON'T LIKE. PEOPLE WHO GIVE YOU ADVICE COULD HAVE BEEN SENT BY GOD TO GIVE YOU WORDS FROM HIM.**

- (3) SEEKING ADVICE FROM EVERYONE BUT GOD. WHEN WE ARE DRIVEN BY FEAR, WE TEND TO SEARCH EVERYWHERE FOR COMFORT, ADVICE, AND RELIEF, HOPING TO FIND AN EASY WAY OUT OF OUR TROUBLES. INSTEAD WE SHOULD CONSULT GOD. ALTHOUGH GOD GIVES EMERGENCY HELP IN A CRISIS, HE PREFERS TO BE OUR GUIDE THROUGHOUT OUR LIVES. BY READING HIS WORD AND ACTIVELY SEEKING TO DO HIS WILL, WE CAN MAINTAIN CONTACT THAT PROVIDES STABILITY, NO MATTER WHAT THE CRISIS.**

IN CLOSING BROTHERS, THERE IS A STANDARD FOR US IN GIVING AND RECEIVING ADVICE. IT'S GOD'S WORD. TO BORROW A PHRASE FROM GEORGE BURNS, "OH GOD" MOVIE, THE NEXT TIME YOU GIVE OR RECEIVE ADVICE, "THINK ABOUT GOD."