

What's the Good Word?

I've got all this knowledge and wisdom from these books, from CDs, and the internet. In my earlier years, I spent some time in the library. But since I went into the ministry, I spend a lot of time walking through the Barnes and Noble Book Store or the Family Book Store. There are numerous SELF-HELP books out there. I have a few books right here.

501 Practical Ways to Love Your Wife and Kids
Happiness Is A Choice
Living Successfully With Screwed-Up People
Don't Let Jerks Get the Best of You
Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do!
Love Yourself
Why Am I Afraid to Love?
Dealing with Anger
1001 More Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking
The Philosophy of Plato

These books may offer a few good helpful ways to coping in life. Some of these books talk about how to get rich, be popular, and have a successful business. Most of these books emphasis how to be self-sufficient. These writers seem to speak with a lot of authority too.

However, nothing is quite so specific, detailed and reliable as the Bible. It is a wonderful book on how to live a holy life. But most importantly, it especially points us to Christ and faith – that which makes us wise unto salvation. For the Apostle Paul tells us, **Eph 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.**

Understanding God's will in your life is what wisdom is all about. It's about Jesus' relationship with you and how He leads you and me. He gives His knowledge through His Word. His Word is truly amazing.

Let's first talk about the authority of God's Word and what is so amazing about it. If you were to look at the insert of your green folder, you will find a short list of Bible helps on a variety of topics in dealing with everyday life. The first half gives references of the temptations we all fall into from time to time. The second half gives references of how God wants us to live out life – to glorify Him.

How many of you have listened to secular motivational speakers at times? They use impressive words, keep your attention, and use a lot of humor. Many of the secular speakers of today can make you feel pretty good, but they are weak on content. How so? They miss the mark on offering anything that grants eternal hope.

Some of these so called motivational speakers, of Moses' day, were called false prophets. They would lead people astray by their sorcery and divination. They would perform what some called miracles. They were deceptions used to sway the people to their way of thinking. Like many of the teachers of today on television, the focus is on self-help instead of our need of the Savior, because we are sinners. We have the need for forgiveness and following Christ, and the power of His Word. Sadly, people of today seem to only hear what they want to hear.

In fact, in **2 Tim. 4:3**, the Apostle Paul warns us, **For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.** They people teach that there is power in numbers.

Moses was a great speaker. The way he talked did not have anything to do with him. The Word he spoke and the miracles he did all came directly from God. He told the people about who to listen to. For he tells us what the Lord said concerning this prophecy in **Deut. 18:18-19 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.**

Peter was a great speaker too. For he proclaimed the fulfillment of this prophecy in Acts. 3. The prophet God spoke about in the Old Testament is about the suffering Servant, Jesus Christ, who spoke with authority. It is clear that we are to listen to Him.

The writer to the Hebrews said, in **Heb 1:1-2, In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.**

In our Gospel lesson today, we heard read that Jesus Christ is the one who speaks with authority. He is the Creator of all things. His teachings are amazing. His word is powerful, for He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey Him. Why are we to listen to Him? Because in Him, there is salvation.

We are accountable to tell other people of what Jesus has done and is doing. In **1**

Cor. 1:17, the Apostle Paul describe what God's purpose for him was all about. For he said, **For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel--not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.** What Paul is trying to impress upon us, his listeners, is that we do not need to be a great speaker with a large vocabulary to share the Gospel of Jesus effectively. The persuasive power is not from the storyteller, but from the power of the Holy Spirit through the spoken Word of God. It is through the Word of God that the Spirit reveals the power of the cross of Christ Jesus.

It is not about signs, wonders, or miracles that we are to look for. For Paul tells us in just a few verses later, in **verses 22-24**, that **Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**

The Good News of Jesus Christ still sounds foolish to a lot of people even today. The world around us focuses on being popular, rich, and powerful. Some of the shows in TV reveal useful skills to survive, but to survive, one must be deceitful, back-stabbing, and manipulative.

Other TV programs emphasize, in some of these so-called reality shows, that do all these good deeds to try and earn gifts. What looks foolish to the world is Jesus' coming – His coming as a humble, poor servant, who offers His kingdom that will last forever to those who have faith in Him.

The world teaches there is power in numbers. The Scriptures teach us the Christ Jesus and His Word is all the power we need. This is what makes us wise unto salvation. Trusting in Jesus Christ, as your personal Lord and Savior, is the greatest wisdom anyone could have.

What does the Bible teach about the foolishness and weaknesses of God? In **1 Cor. 1:25** it says, **For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.**

What does God's foolishness reveal? The message of Jesus' death for our sins sounds foolish to those who do not have faith in Him. The world teaches that death is the end of the road. But Christ's resurrection teaches that life goes on with Him as our Shepherd. What did the Apostle Paul teach concerning this? **Phil. 1:21**, he said, **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** He taught that Jesus resurrection demonstrates His power over sin, death and Satan.

What do you teach a person who asks how they can be in Christ Jesus? God provides us the answer. We are told in **1 Cor. 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.**

God is the source of – and the reason for – this relationship that we have with Him. The heavenly Father sent us His Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. He has given us His written Word. When does God's purpose and will for us begin? In **2 Tim. 3:15**, Paul explains – **that from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.** And we are to continue to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Savior, and in His written Word. We are to, as Luther put, "read, study, learn and inwardly digest" God's Word.

What's the good Word? We learn of God's offer of salvation to all people through the blood of Lamb, Jesus Christ. His resurrection proves His power over sin, death and Satan. There are people all round us who haven't heard about this yet. If we are truly a missional church, then we need to carry out what the people in the region of Galilee did. For it says in **Mk. 1:28**, it says **News about Him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.** This is what it means to be a missional church. It is to outreach and witnessing the Gospel News to the lost. This is God's mission He gave us to carry out.

My prayer for you is this, and let us pray this together from **Col. 3:16-17 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**