

FAMILY NEWS

MAY 06, 2018

Madrid
CHURCH OF CHRIST

"COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS..."

WELCOME GUESTS!

If you are visiting with us and have any questions about what you have seen or heard today, please fill out a visitor's card or ask to talk to one of our shepherds. Our desire is to give you a biblical answer about the things that we believe and practice.

THIS WEEK'S

READING:

5/07 - Ezra 6-9

5/08 - Ezra 10; Neh 1-2

5/09 - Neh 3-5

5/10 - Neh 6-9

5/11 - Neh 10-12

5/12 - Neh 13; Esther 1-2

5/13 - Esther 3-6

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

ASSEMBLY TIMES:

SUNDAY

Sermon 9:00 am

Bible Classes 10:00 am

Worship 11:00 am

WEDNESDAY

Bible Classes 7:00 pm

THE CALL OF WISDOM

BY DOY MOYER

"Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice?" (Prov 8:1)

Wisdom is a major theme of Scripture, pervasive throughout. By wisdom God founded the earth (Prov 3:9); He gives wisdom (2:6). We are to walk in wisdom (Eph 5:15-17) and pray for it (Jas 1:5). Godly wisdom, seen as a skill (particularly in pleasing God), is at the heart of what the servant of God pursues within the context of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt 6:33).

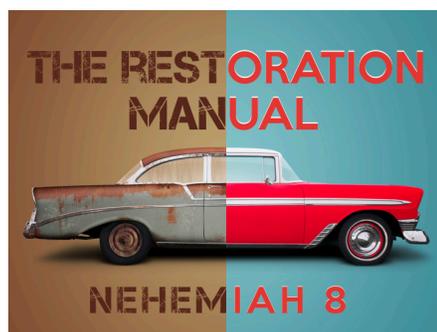
"Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth." (Prov 4:5).

Is it possible that we sometimes push back against wisdom on the basis that we have our rights? If we refuse to listen to godly wisdom for the sake of doing what we believe is our right, then we are letting selfishness get the better of us. If our decisions are all about us, with little help from the wisdom above (Jas 3:13-18), then how can we really say that we are seeking first God's kingdom? In what ways are we showing the self-denial that our Lord enjoins upon those who will follow Him (Luke 9:23)?

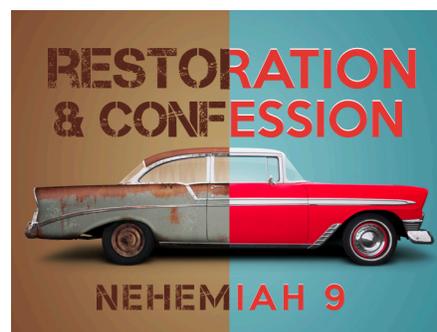
Some argue that we cannot condemn anything that is not specifically condemned in Scripture. Those who make specific applications have been referred to as legalists or Pharisees, binding what God has not. That is possible, though the charge is not very helpful. Yet here's what I see as a problem. When we are looking strictly for the specific condemnation of a practice in Scripture as the basis on which (continued on next page >>>>)

TODAY'S LESSONS:

9AM



11AM



"Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."

we will either do it or not do it, especially if it is in question, then we are showing little appreciation for the call of wisdom. Who is being more “Pharisaical”—those who must have a specific statement of Scripture against a practice, or those who seek the bigger picture found in God’s wisdom and principles that cover more than only what is specifically stated? Must we see something specifically stated before we can see the dangers therein, or can the wisdom and principles found in Scripture guide us in the absence of specific do’s and don’ts? Are we looking for a checklist or are we seeking the undergirding principles that comprehensively guide us?

I understand that there is a danger in condemning or binding where God has not specified. There is just as much a danger in neglecting what Scripture teaches and loosening where God has not. The Pharisees were guilty of both. Yet In the absence of specifics, God calls on us to use wisdom and discretion. Wisdom and discernment must come in when we have judgment calls to make. One may say that there is a difference between “unwise” and “sinful,” but if we are willing to be unwise anyway, what are we saying about ourselves and our priorities? If I stop merely at asking, “Is it sinful?” then have I not avoided one of the most significant features of God’s word in supplying godly wisdom and overarching principles? It’s not like wisdom is disconnected from Scripture or that we are free simply to ignore it when we cannot specifically say that something is a sin. Wisdom calls to us, and we ought to be listening.

Now lest anyone think I’m trying to set up some system for making a specific list of all sins for everyone, that is not the case. This is meant as an admonition for personal reflection. I have no interest in deciding everyone’s personal habits. At the same time, let’s not pretend that personal decisions are made in a vacuum and do not influence others. Being cautious is not a vice, and if others can supply advice and wise principles that we may not have considered, then it’s good to lay it all on the table so that we all make better choices.

Wisdom, then, provides us with principles by which to make better decisions in the absence of specifics. This is why the mature have their senses trained to discern good and evil (Heb 5:14). This is where we learn that “things like these” (Gal 5:21) can be understood through godly principles even though we aren’t given every specific application. God expects us to learn and apply principles to our actions and attitudes, even when they involve liberties. Wisdom is a skill, and if we are not actively seeking and applying wisdom, how will we appreciate and grow therein?

Questions for reflection:

- Is it possible that we are using our liberties to trample the consciences of others (cf. Rom 14)?
- Is it possible that we are using our liberties as a covering for doing wrong (cf. 1 Pet 2:16)?
- Are our decisions made more on the basis of what will please us or what will glorify God? (cf. 1 Cor 10:31; 1 Pet 2:9)
- Is it possible to exercise a personal liberty to the neglect of God’s glory?
- Are we actively seeking to make choices today in order to glorify God?

“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17, NKJV).