INTRODUCTION: In Proverbs 11:14a we read, “Where no counsel is, the people fall...” In this message we want to focus our attention upon the character trait of “seeking counsel” and how to establish a godly cabinet of counselors.

I Kings 3:16-28 records a story in which two harlots came to King Solomon for his wisdom and discernment in settling a dispute. Here we read,

“Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. (17) And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. (18) And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. (19) And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. (20) And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. (21) And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. (22) And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. (23) Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. (24) And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. (25) And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. (26) Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. (27) Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. (28) And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.”

Notice they had been living in the same house, and each had a young child. During the night, one of the women accidentally smothered her child. She went to the mother of the living child who was sleeping and exchanged her dead baby for the living one.

The next day both claimed the living baby as they took this issue to King Solomon. They stood before Solomon, and each gave her side of the story. In order to resolve the problem, Solomon called for a sword to divide the young child into two pieces one for each mother. The actual mother, pleaded for the baby's life and offered to give the child to the other woman, who said, “divide it.” No doubt Solomon had no question about who was the real mother. He saw the true mother's love.

In this story, we find two harlots who were intelligent enough to seek counsel. I find that people who seek counsel will benefit in two ways:

(1) They will receive direction for developing more character.
(2) They will learn with the help of a counselor how not to destroy the character they had already gained.
Because the Bible gives wisdom on seeking counsel, let me share some principles which I trust will encourage you to be open to counsel.

1. **Do not be guilty of never seeking counsel from the Word of God.** Remember the Bible *IS* the Word of God.

   In Colossians 2:2-3 we read, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

   In verses 8-9 of the same chapter we read, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

   In these verses we find that in God is the fullness of wisdom. Therefore if I need wisdom, I need to consult the God of the universe from the Word of God.

   Proverbs 19:20-21, "Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."

   Proverbs 8:14 speaking of wisdom, God said, "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength."

2. **Do not be guilty of never seeking counsel from a trusted source.**

   Proverbs 11:14 says, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude (many) of counsellors there is safety."

   Deuteronomy 32:28 says, "For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them."

   These two verses teach the importance of seeking counsel. However, some Christians never seek counsel. Never seeking counsel means trouble. At one time or another every person needs to seek counsel. I have found that most, if not every person who leaves God's will, left it because they never sought or received counsel. People with character seek spiritual counsel regarding:

   They seek counsel before and after MARRIAGE.
   They seek counsel about LIFE’S ACTIVITIES and LIFE’S NEEDS.
   They seek counsel about FINANCES.
   They seek counsel about DEATH.
   They seek counsel about FAMILY and CHILDREN.
   They seek counsel about CAREERS.

   As your Pastor, by KNOWLEDGE, by WISDOM, and by EXPERIENCE of fact and of age I have a lot to give in counsel. Do I immediately have the answer to your problems? Perhaps yes, and perhaps no, but I know where to go and to whom to go for answers. So it will do you well not only to seek your Pastor’s counsel, but also to do what you can to implement that counsel in your life.

   So why do some Christians never seek counsel?

I believe there are **THREE** reasons for never seeking or receiving counsel.

   **Number 1:** **Because you plan to counsel yourself.** This is certainly not best, nor is it enough. The following three verses adequately explain why. Job 18:7b tells us, "His own counsel shall cast him down." Jeremiah 7:24a says, "But they hearkened no...but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward." Seeking and trusting your own counsel will take you backward. Psalm
5:10b says, “Let them fall by their own counsels.” You may choose to counsel yourself, but the result is usually self-destruction.

**Number 2: Because you feel that if you ask for help with a problem, your weakness will be revealed.** Perhaps you think that after you reveal your weakness to a leader, the counselor will hold your weakness against you to lead. The truth is that you are actually more qualified to lead after receiving and following counsel than before you sought advice. People who seek counsel usually become excellent leaders.

**Number 3: Because you are simply too proud.** You know it all; you can handle the situation yourself. The Bible gives a record of only one Person Who needed no counsel and was a success. Isaiah 40:13-14 says, “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?” If you don’t think you need any counsel, you must presume you are God because He is the only One Who has never needed counsel from anybody. You must think you are your own god. Never seeking or accepting counsel can be equated with having no character.

3. **Do not be guilty of seeking unwise counsel.**

Psalm 1:1a says, “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.” Job 22:18b says, “The counsel of the wicked is far from me.” Proverbs 12:5b informs us that, “The counsels of the wicked are deceit.” Christians should seek counsel from seasoned, older, and wiser people.

In I Kings 12:8-13, the account of Rehoboam seeking counsel from the young men instead of the old men is given; and as a result of his lack of discernment, he split the kingdom. Here we read,

“But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: (9) And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? (10) And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that speak unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s loins. (11) And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. (12) So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. (13) And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men’s counsel that they gave him;”

I'm sure Rehoboam didn't think the counsel he received would be so detrimental to his people. The same is true of Christians today. Receiving and accepting unwise counsel could cause a church split or even division in one’s own home. Why? Bad counsel was sought, accepted, and followed!

The reason some Christians seek counsel from people their own age is because they don't want truthful and right counsel. They want someone who will agree with them so that they may do whatever they please. Accepting and following unwise counsel usually ends in devastation.

Characterless people have no counsel to offer and few people who will trust them. A counselor with no character may have good sense and may talk a good talk, but he cannot walk a good walk.

4. **Seek counsel from a wise person as often as necessary.** Proverbs 3:20a teaches, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.”
Proverbs 12:15, “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.”
Proverbs 11:14, “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.”
Proverbs 24:6, “For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war: and in multitude of counsellors there is safety.”
Proverbs 15:22, “Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established.”
Proverbs 20:18, “Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war.”

Even the President of the United States realizes this and chooses for himself a group of men and women whom he calls his cabinet. These are experts in different fields in which the President has to make decisions. He meets with them for counsel and advice.

Each person should have several people on his or her cabinet.

First: **Your Pastor.** Before making any serious decision, certainly one would want to counsel with their pastor. Oftentimes this should be done in a private conference. Other times simply a telephone conversation will do. But the wise person will seek the counsel of their pastor before making life's great decisions.

This is the reason that parents should build the pastor up in the minds of their children. The day may come when a young person will have to have the help of a counselor. It well might be that the pastor is the only one that can help. At that time the parents will be glad that they have taught their children to respect the pastor.

The godly pastor longs to help his people. He will be glad to counsel with you. Seek his advice. He should be on your cabinet.

Second: **Choose someone with the gift of wisdom.** The Apostle Paul speaks in his first letter to the Corinthian church about the gifts of the Spirit. One of these gifts is the gift of wisdom. God graciously gives to some a double portion of discernment and wisdom. Each person should seek out such people and have one or more on his cabinet. One should not be afraid to seek their advice.

Third: **A sincere friend.** Proverbs 27:9 teaches us, “Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.” This should be someone who is friend enough to be honest, sincere, and frank. This counselor should be one who knows you well, loves you dearly in spite of your faults, and would counsel you for your own good and not for his own personal benefit of standing with you.

Fourth: **Someone who is successful in your field or in the field you plan to enter.** To be sure this person should be a Christian. Every person should have such a cabinet member.

Fifth: **Parents (if Christians).** Each child should feel that he is able to go talk to his mother and father. Your parents should be the easiest people to talk with.

1. **Start early to have regular talks with your children.** This will help develop at-hominess between the parent and the child.
2. **Nothing should appear to be funny to the parent.** Their problems may seem trivial to you, but they are dead serious to your children. Be
interested, listen carefully, and never make light of their conversation no matter how trivial it may seem.

(3) **Treat them as adults.** Never let your children feel that you look down at him or her as they share their problem with you.

(4) **Listen carefully to everything they say.** Let them present their case. Be sure the entire case has been presented before the jury gives its verdict. Many times this is the main thing that a child wants - just someone to listen to him.

(5) **Always have time for private conversations with your children.** If the parent does not take time for the child when the child is young, the child will not take time for the parent when he is old. Do not make your children feel that you are rushed. Give them ample time and let the know that they are tremendously important to you.

(6) **Be on the lookout for times when your children might want to talk to their parents.** Sometimes a young person might be a bit timid to talk to Mom and Dad. Oftentimes a wise mother or father will suggest that they talk as they see the need arising in the life of a child. Be on the lookout for such times and give ample opportunity for them to discuss their problems with you.

(7) **Always be confidential.** When a child talks to a parent in confidence, it should be kept in strict confidence.

(8) **Build up your child's confidence in you, the parent.** There should be a definite understanding that Mother and Dad are loving experts who can give advice worthy of being followed.

We have been discussing the Christian's cabinet. On that cabinet should be your Pastor, your parents, someone with the gift of wisdom, a sincere friend, and people successful in your chosen field. Take a moment now and list potential cabinet members. Keep the list accessible. When there is a decision to be made, go to your cabinet members and ask their counsel and advice. Of course, the decision is yours, but it should not be made without consulting your cabinet.

If God has spoken to your heart after reading the sermon “Character – Seeking Wise Counsel” then right now talk to God about what He has spoken to you.

Do you have the assurance that one day you will go to heaven? If you have no assurance that you know Jesus Christ, then I trust you will decide to accept Him as your personal Savior. The Bible tells us in

Acts 16:31, “...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...”
Romans 10:13, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

This prayer is here for those who need to ask Jesus to be their personal Savior: “I do want to go to Heaven. I know I am a sinner, and I do believe Jesus Christ died for me. I realize I cannot buy this great salvation, nor can I earn it. Knowing Jesus died on the cross and arose from the grave to pay my sin debt and to purchase my salvation, I do now trust Him as my Savior, and from this moment on I am completely depending on Him for my salvation.”

If you made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, let me know. Please send an e-mail to pdmikBBM@aol.com and I will send you some literature that will help you in your Christian life.
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