

Theme: The way of wisdom is not walked alone — our companions on the journey will shape our character, sustain us in adversity, warm us in cold seasons, and protect us in spiritual battle

I. Intro – Descartes' Search for Wisdom

- A. Winter of 1619, René Descartes retreats to isolation in a small stove-heated room
- B. He is trying to rebuild human knowledge from scratch
- C. Cogito ergo sum – I think, therefore I am
- D. A key moment leading to the Enlightenment & modernity
- E. But wisdom is not found in isolation, but in community!

II. Walking the Way of Wisdom

- A. Wisdom and Folly are a way/path
Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Prov 13:20
 - 1. Wisdom is found in walking a certain path
 - 2. This is why the Jews called it “the way of wisdom”
 - 3. The Greeks also usually walked around as they talked to discover wisdom.
 - 4. The righteous and wicked have a way/path
But the **path of the righteous** is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day.
¹⁹ The **way of the wicked** is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble. Prov 4:18-19
 - a. Both righteous and wicked are walking a way/path
 - b. But the paths/ways are very different!
 - 1. Righteous – growing light – don't stumble

2. Wicked – deep darkness, stumble

- 5. Wisdom is not learned or experienced sitting alone and looking within, but as we walk through life.

B. Our way is related to our companions

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Prov 13:20

- 1. The path of wisdom is full of the wise!
- 2. The path of folly is full of the foolish!
- 3. Wisdom is found, not in isolation, but by walking with the community of the wise!
- 4. I can know which path I am walking by looking at my companions!

C. My companions will determine my eventual character

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Prov 13:20

- 1. If I walk with the wise, I become wiser
- 2. If I walk with fools, I start to act like a fool, and reap the consequences.
- 3. Wisdom is understanding that whom I choose as companions for my journey of life will have a determinative effect on my character and life!
“Be among the spices, and you will smell of them. Association begets assimilation. Nothing has a greater power and energy to effect holiness than the communion of saints.” – Thomas Watson, *God's Holiness (Works, 2:127)*
 - a. You will “smell” like your companions!
 - b. Association begets assimilation – it is the natural outcome and fruit of being with people!

- c. If you want to be wise and holy and fear the Lord, spend time with those who are wise and holy and fear the Lord!
- 4. Wisdom chooses its companions carefully, knowing that they will have a great effect on my eventual character and life!

III. The Benefits of Walking With the Wise

A. Walking with the wise helps me become wiser

Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. Prov 13:20

- 1. Wisdom is a journey, and I can grow in wisdom.
- 2. It is impossible to grow in wisdom by spending time with fools!

B. Walking with the wise multiplies my efforts

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. Ecclesiastes 4:9

- 1. A team will outperform a lone individual!
- 2. This is the blessing of synergy, where the fruit of team efforts is greater than the sum of the individual efforts.
- 3. If you want the reward for labor to multiply, walk with the wise!

C. Walking with the wise sustains me in adversity

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. Proverbs 17:17

- 1. A true friend will always stick with me!
- 2. True companions will stand by me during adversity!
- 3. Life will have seasons of ease, but also times of real hardship and adversity!

- 4. During hard times, I will often struggle and fall, but friends will stick with me and help me back up!
For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Ecclesiastes 4:10

- a. It is not 'if' but when adversity will knock me down!
- b. The question is, will I be walking with wise companions who will lift me back up, or will I be alone?
- c. This is determined not when I fall, but long before!
- d. Prepare for future adversity today – by developing friendship with the wise!

D. Walking with the wise gives me comfort

Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? Ecclesiastes 4:11

- 1. When life turns cold, we need a close friend!
- 2. Emperor penguins survive the Antarctic winter by huddling in a group!
- 3. If I am walking closely with wise friends, when I grow cold, they will warm me by their presence.
- 4. This is true both in hard times when cold winds blow in my life, and when my own heart grows cold – they will help stir warmth and love for God in my heart!

E. Walking with the wise protects me in spiritual war

And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:12

- 1. The final example is battle!
- 2. This is true for physical and spiritual war!

3. We idolize the lone warrior like Rambo, who can take on an army single-handedly, but in reality such people die in battle.

4. Wisdom knows that we are in a spiritual war and finds safety by being part of a community – and it does this BEFORE the battle is raging.

“There is no wisdom in fighting with an enemy to give him the advantage of the ground. We give Satan the advantage of the ground when we are alone.” Thomas Watson, *And Lead Us Not Into Temptation (Works, 4:402)*

5. There are several areas where community helps in our spiritual warfare

a. They can give wise advice for our warfare

A wise man is full of strength, and a man of knowledge enhances his might, ⁶ for by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory. Pr. 24:5-6

1. We are not the first people to face this battle!
2. It is wise to seek advice for how to resist Satan, temptation, sin, and the world!

b. They protect us from the deceitfulness of sin

But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Hebrews 3:13

1. Sin is deceitful – that is why we give in!
2. If we clearly see the temptation for what is and the outcome of our sin, we would not give in!
3. We need brothers and sisters to help us see through the smoke and mirrors of temptation and sin!

c. They stir up our love for God – which is where victory is found!

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25

1. We need to be in close, regular fellowship to stir up our love for God and desire to do good works.
2. “Be often among the godly. They are the salt of the earth and will help to season you. Their counsels may direct, and their prayers may quicken. Such holy sparks may be thrown into your breasts and may quicken devotion in you.” Thomas Watson, *Prescribing Some Helps to Godliness (Works, 7:189)*
3. An ember that is removed from the fire grows cold!
4. But an ember among the other coals is constantly re-ignited so that it burns brightly.
5. To resist Satan, the world, temptation, and sin, we must have a white-hot love for Jesus – but we can only have this to the degree we are in close, in-person relationships with other believers.

IV. Applying the Word

A. Do I see that “association begets assimilation”?

1. Thomas Watson’s paraphrase of Proverbs 13:20 is true! I become like my closest companions!
2. This works both negatively and positively.
3. But the reality is we HAVE to spend a lot of time with those who do not fear God – at work, with neighbors, in daily interactions.
4. So we MUST CHOOSE to spend time and build close relationships with those who do fear the Lord, or we will slowly be conformed to the world around us.

5. Isolation from close relationships with other believers will beget assimilation to the ways of the world!
6. If something in me reacts against this or thinks it does not apply to me – hear the voice of wisdom calling out today!

B. Walking with the Wise – Practical Steps

1. Gather with the church REGULARLY on Sundays
 - a. Hebrews 10:24-25 is about corporate worship.
 - b. This is the foundation of building community
 - c. Those who view gathering with the church for worship as optional are walking the path of foolishness, not wisdom.
2. Take advantage of special fellowship opportunities
 - a. We regularly have breakfasts, lunches & BONFIRE.
 - b. These are not just nice events – they are a critical part of building community!
 - c. Make it a priority to be part of these events, refusing to allow other things to crowd them out.
3. Be part of a connect group
 - a. Corporate worship is essential but not sufficient!
 - b. The type of relationships envisioned in Proverbs 13:20 cannot be built just on Sunday morning.
 - c. If we lived in a small village, we would see and interact with one another throughout the week naturally, but we do not – so we must make plans to gather.
 - d. These groups are where we really get to know one another, to share with one another, to pray for one another.

- e. Look at the website or B'Ridge to see them and join one TODAY!
4. Invite someone out for lunch, dinner, or to an event
 - a. This is a great way to get to know each other.
 - b. Can go out, invite to your house, to sit around a fire, or walk around Annapolis.
 - c. This will deepen relationships and help you grow in wisdom!

C. The Table of Fellowship

1. Meals are places of fellowship!
2. Jesus calls us friends (John 15:15) and invites us to His Table
3. Apostles' Creed and 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Walking With the Wise

Proverbs 13:20; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

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Communion

Romans 15:5-6

Teaching keywords: Fellowship; wisdom and knowledge; community; spiritual warfare

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15:5-6