

DENNIS BURKE MINISTRIES

Insights

The Way to a New Life
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THE
wisdom
THAT WILL
DEFINE YOUR
FUTURE



IN THIS ISSUE

WISDOM LIGHTS OUR PATH, BUT WE MUST STEP FORWARD
HOLD BACK DISASTER WITH THE POWER OF GOD



THE *wisdom* THAT WILL DEFINE YOUR FUTURE

BY DR. DENNIS BURKE

When we think about someone being wise, we usually think of a person who has given us a perspective we haven't ever considered before. That person's perspective hits particularly close to home for us if it includes a personal interest in our own situation.

Godly wisdom brings us a biblical perspective about issues we're facing or deciding in our own lives. An idea can dawn on us that we hadn't before seen, which then later turns out to be the very thing God wanted us to understand. It is by this wisdom from God that we can see how to apply the knowledge we have. Knowledge alone isn't usually enough to make decisions. We may know a lot about the issue at hand but not have the perspective we need. It takes godly wisdom to see through the issues and find the right path.

So wisdom gives us the ability to understand how knowledge can apply to our situation. It is for this reason that wisdom and knowledge are coupled so closely together throughout the Proverbs of Solomon.

Solomon is the primary author of the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and is considered to be the wisest man in history. Throughout his writings are insights that provide us with wisdom for life.

As a young man who was about to become king in Israel, God spoke to Solomon in a dream, saying, "... Ask! What shall I give you?" (2 Chronicles 1:7).

Solomon's answer was amazing, and it pleased God. Solomon didn't ask for wealth, for victory over his enemies, or for personal health. He asked for wisdom to lead God's people.

Notice God's response to Solomon's request:

..."Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life — but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king — wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like" (2 Chronicles 1:11, 12).

Because Solomon chose to pursue what was most important, God blessed him not only with the wisdom and knowledge he had asked for, but also with the wealth and honor he could have pursued. Solomon had discovered what we all must come to realize — that wisdom is our primary need and can be found only in God's Word. Everything else pales in the light of God's wisdom for living.

This is why the pursuit of godly wisdom must be at the top of our priority list. Solomon stated this truth clearly in Proverbs 4:7–9 (*TEV*): “Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do. Whatever else you get, get insight. Love wisdom, and she will make you great. Embrace her, and she will bring you honor. She will be your crowning glory.”

In sharp contrast to godly wisdom is wisdom from the world's point of view. You hear this type of wisdom touted all of the time, such as strategies for becoming a millionaire, beating the systems, building a successful business, or being an influential person. Although many people have certainly demonstrated that the world's wisdom can bring successful results in areas such as money or status, that kind of wisdom will always fall short. The person seeking truth for godly living will be left

...INCOME WOULD IMMEDIATELY BE TRIPLE THAT OF MY CURRENT STORE...”



feeling empty, still standing on the outside of God's best for his life.

As believers, we shouldn't accept the typical definitions for success. We have God's Word, and His wisdom in that Word redefines true, lasting success. When God's wisdom redefines our lives, we can see beyond human reasoning and recognize the bigger picture. This godly perspective helps us see how someone can have wealth or status in society and still fail at life. Thus, like Solomon, we are on a continual quest for more of God's wisdom so we can experience true meaning and fulfillment in our walk with Him.

Wisdom from above creates a sense of direction and opportunity. It continually points us to the path that will bring us the greatest results and the deepest sense of fulfillment. Without this godly wisdom, everything begins to seem vague and pointless. We may be making progress, but we still don't know where we're going.

Inner strength to stay the course of God's plan for us comes

when we receive His wisdom and then apply that wisdom to maintain a clear future goal. The inner strength comes from the Holy Spirit as He supplies all we need to rise above the clamor of the conditions or conflicts we may be facing and to continue our forward progress on the path God has laid out before us.

We can see an example of this in Jesus' life. When Peter first heard Jesus describe that He would be arrested and killed, Peter declared, “We won't let that happen to You, Lord!” (see Matthew 16:21–23).

Of course, Peter spoke first and thought later. He certainly spoke out of his deep love for Jesus and his desire to protect Him. Yet Peter's feelings ran completely opposite to God's ultimate plan. Jesus was to die for all of mankind. Peter saw only from his own limited point of view and not from God's perspective at all.

Peter's words were a temptation to Jesus, so Jesus quickly rebuked Satan. Then Jesus said in response to Peter's words: “...You stand right in my path when you see things from man's point of view and not from God's” (Matthew 16:23 *Phillips*).

Let me give you another example from my own experience as a young man. For approximately eight months, I wasn't clear about the steps I needed to take toward

the ministry God had called me to fulfill. Vikki and I had been youth ministers at a powerful church in southern California, and I knew beyond any doubt that God wanted me to minister His Word to people for the rest of my life. However, I just wasn't clear about the direction I should take after leaving my position as youth minister.

Shortly after resigning from that position, I leased a fast-food restaurant that was a part of a chain primarily located in southern California. I threw myself into learning the business and began to do quite well. The store I leased from the company was a training store where new management personnel could learn the system and then move into a more lucrative store.

When I first took this store, it had been producing an income deficit for many months as the result of previous managers who had left the store in trouble. But within three months, I had the store making a profit again. I had learned the system and worked hard, and I was watching my efforts begin to pay off. The company had also been carefully watching my performance to see if I was qualified for promotion to a better position in the company.

It was during this time that Vikki and I became convinced that we had to pursue our calling to ministry. After eight months in the fast-food business, we had the opportunity to move to Texas and take positions with Kenneth Copeland Ministries. We knew that this was God's open door.

I let the company know that I was planning to make this change and would not be continuing to work for them. My direct supervisor was stunned. He told me that I was slated to

be the manager of a new store that was opening in a very upscale part of southern California and that the store income would immediately be triple that of my current store. Consequently, my own income would be dramatically increased as well.

This placed me at a huge crossroads in my life — and there was another twist as well. Just across the street from my fast-food store was a privately owned frame shop. The owner came to me one day with an amazing proposition. He said he had been watching me and the attention I was giving to my store. He added that he was getting older and had no children to whom he could give his business. The man offered to train me in his store with the intention of giving it to me later when he was ready to retire.

I was flattered that someone — actually, two different “someones” — had prospects of a good future for me. They had seen qualities that impressed them and could therefore envision my future success as I used these qualities.

These opportunities to make much more money and pursue a successful career either with a company behind me or with a store of my own gave me more paths to consider at that juncture of my life — and each of these options could have been the right one. So I looked at the three paths that had been placed before me. I could have served God in any of those positions and been successful. Certainly God raises up business people, store owners, and workers on every level to serve Him and fulfill His purposes. Any of the options could have been opportunities for me to live a blessed life.

But there was only one option that matched the deep desire of my heart and the direction I had received from God. That

meant there was only one path for me. God’s wisdom settled my decision, and Vikki and I were on our way to Texas. Although many people may have looked at those options from the sidelines and questioned the wisdom of our choice, it was godly wisdom that defined our decision and, consequently, the direction and the ultimate destiny of our lives.

For Vikki and me, this was the step we needed to take to set us on course to fulfill our calling. It will be the same for you as well. Godly wisdom will illuminate the path before you, and your faith will enable you to take the step.

From a purely “dollars and cents” perspective, our decision to move to Texas was not the right move. We were stepping away from financial success and, in the natural, it looked like we were putting our future in jeopardy. After all, what kind of future is there for a young, inexperienced person who desires to become a minister?

There was nothing inherently right or wrong about any of the possibilities I had before me at that time in my life. God could have blessed me in business or in ministry. But Vikki and I needed to know God’s wisdom and to see His will for our lives from His perspective. We knew our strength and direction had to come from the deposit

of His Word and His Spirit within. We were looking for the wisdom from above.

Notice how James describes this wisdom: “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:17, 18).

Isaiah 33:6 describes God’s wisdom this way: “Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times, and the strength of salvation; the fear of the Lord is His treasure.”

There was a wellspring of wisdom deep within Vikki and me that brought peace. That was all we needed. When we locked in to God’s plan, we had His wisdom to see all the other paths presented to us from His perspective. For us, only one path radiated with His light. The other good possibilities had no attraction. We could see that they were only distractions. We knew that we *knew* God had given us His wisdom and knowledge about the matter. We were stable and sure-footed on His path for our lives.

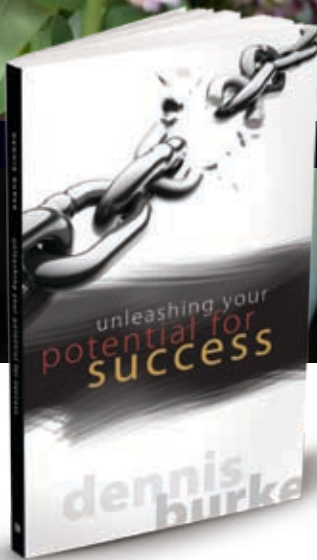
Job sums it up this way: “You will also declare a thing, and it will be established for you; so light will shine on your ways” (Job 22:28). This is the way God defines true success for us as believers. As we discover and then declare God’s wisdom, we establish His will in us, allowing His light to illumine our path and keep us moving toward His destiny for our lives.

*Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture references are taken from the *New King James Version* of the Bible.

...ONLY ONE
OPTION...
MATCHED...THE
DIRECTION...
FROM GOD.
THAT MEANT
THERE WAS
ONLY ONE
PATH FOR ME.”

GOD’S goals
for *you*

You will never experience lasting satisfaction in accomplishing anything outside of the activities and ideas inspired by God. God has called you and me to become co-creators with Him. When you apply every resource available to accomplish the goals God has given you, you will find fulfillment.





holding back DISASTER

BY VIKKI BURKE

BY VIKKI BURKE

In an instant, I was awakened out of a deep sleep. As my eyes opened, I heard these words: “What would you do if a tsunami hit Hawaii?”

Undisturbed, I answered, “I would go to higher ground — but You hold me safe beyond the reach of my enemies. You save me from violent opponents.”

The Lord had given me this scripture from Psalm 18:48 a few days after Dennis left for a two-week trip to New Zealand, and I had declared it daily. I assumed it was for Dennis’ protection during his trip. But God had another reason for planting that scripture in my heart — He knew what was to come. Throughout the two weeks I declared this verse, I had thought a great deal about this place “beyond the reach of my

enemies” — which is, of course, the secret place of the Most High God referred to in Psalm 91:1.

You might think that this unusual experience caused me to be restless or fearful. Instead, I was in such peace that I instantly fell back to sleep.

The next morning, I didn’t remember being awakened — not at that time anyway. I flew out early that morning for meetings



“But if we don't pay attention and become too busy with other things to hear His voice, we will miss His warnings.”

in Hawaii, where Dennis and I had planned to reunite after his meetings in New Zealand. We wanted to rest Saturday before beginning our meetings Sunday morning. But on Saturday at 5:00 a.m., the pastor of the church called and informed Dennis that an earthquake, registering 8.8 on the Richter scale, had just struck off the coast of Chile, sending a tsunami bearing down on the Hawaiian Islands. A mandatory evacuation to “higher ground” was in effect.

Immediately I remembered being awakened the night before and related my experience to Dennis. We prayed, forbidding the tsunami to come near any of the Pacific Islands. We prayed that the tsunami would hit the words we had prayed and bounce back in the direction it had come.

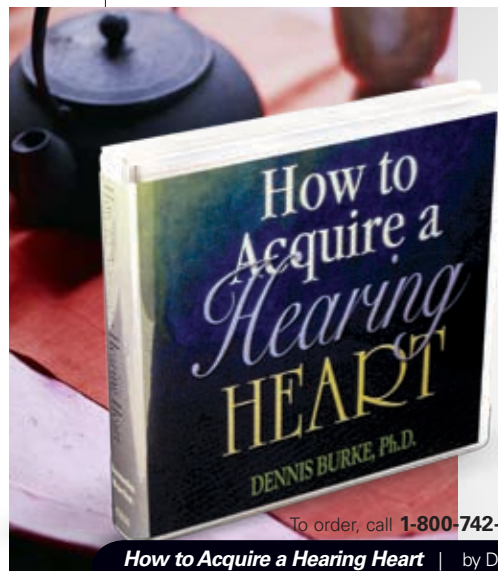
The hotel staff moved everyone to rooms on higher levels. After moving our luggage, we enjoyed a peaceful breakfast while others rushed to the airport, trying to get on a flight before the tsunami hit. But the Holy Spirit had already warned me of what was to come. He had given me the scripture to stand on two weeks before the earthquake struck, and we were at peace.

What an advantage those of us who are believers have because of our relationship with the Holy Spirit! John 16:13 says, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not be presenting his own ideas; he will be telling you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.” The Spirit of God will warn us before negative events happen so we can either pray to influence those events or avoid them altogether. But if we don't pay attention and become too busy with other things to hear His voice, we will miss His warnings.

Life's distractions can fill our minds with what I call “static,” which can hinder us from hearing the Holy Spirit. It's similar to what happens in the natural when we're listening to a radio station while driving our cars. If we travel too far from the source transmitting the

broadcast, static will interfere with what we want to hear. And if we keep driving away from the source, before long we won't hear anything but static. However, all we have to do to solve the problem is get closer to the source; then the broadcast will come in loud and clear. Much like the static that interferes with a radio broadcast, the “static” from the world can interfere with our ability to hear the Holy Spirit. But when we draw closer to the Source of truth, we will hear what He is saying loud and clear.

When the Holy Spirit warns us of an upcoming or potential disaster, He fully intends for us to pray and use our God-given authority to control the situation. Jesus said, “Believe me, whatever you forbid upon earth will be what is forbidden in Heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be what is permitted in Heaven” (Matthew 18:18 *Phillips*). We can forbid disaster and change what the devil has planned — or we can do nothing and, by our lack of action, permit the devil to have his way. God gave us the assignment to have dominion and subdue the earth (see Genesis 1:28). We won't be fearful when the Holy Spirit warns us of adverse things to come when we



We know God is always speaking — the question is how well are you hearing what He's saying?

Have you ever felt like answers or directions from God are not coming through clearly? How confident would you be if you knew you were following God's voice? In order to experience the results God intends you must hear His voice, be faithful to His plan and see yourself from His perspective.

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know how to exercise the authority God has given us to change circumstances and live as overcomers in the midst of every situation.

A well-known prophet delivered this message in 1998 under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

“You will begin to hold back disasters that the devil had planned, not only in weather, not only in money, but also in politics and in the affairs of nations, for God Almighty is Ruler in the affairs of men. And when My Word is strong in your spirit and strong in your mouth, I will use you as a control point. And when disasters are planned, you will stand up and say, ‘No!’”

There has never been a more appropriate time to exercise our authority than this hour we’re living in right now.

When the enemy came against Joseph for the dream God gave him, Joseph didn’t collapse under the pressure of the mistreatment he experienced. Instead, he kept his focus on the dream and kept his heart right toward those who abused him. As a result, he worked with God to make the dream a reality. When Joseph finally

met his treasonous brothers face to face, he said, “As far as I am concerned, God turned into good what you meant for evil, for He brought me to this high position I have today so that I could save the lives of many people” (Genesis 50:20 TLB). No matter what the devil plans against us, God can turn it around and bring good out of what the enemy meant for evil.

The apostle Paul also faced a situation that looked hopeless while sailing to Rome. He warned the crew of the ship that the voyage would end in disaster if they sailed. But when a south wind began to softly blow, the captain thought it was a sign of good weather and, against the warning of the man of God, ordered the ship to set sail.

When the ship was far from shore,

a violent northeastern storm arose and tossed it to and fro. After days of violent winds, the crew threw all the cargo overboard, hoping to stay afloat. However, two weeks passed without the people on board ever seeing the sun or stars. By that time, everyone had lost all hope of being saved — everyone, that is, except the apostle Paul.

This life-threatening situation could have been avoided had the ship’s crew listened to the Lord’s warning, but they didn’t. Yet Paul didn’t panic when no one listened, nor did he gloat when later he was proven right. Paul didn’t say, “I warned you not to set sail. Now we’re sure to die because of your stubbornness.” Instead, he looked to the Lord for deliverance, despite the circumstances.

Paul’s trust in God was rewarded when an angel appeared to him and said: “Do

not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you” (Acts 27:24 NKJV). It was Paul’s divine assignment to stand before Caesar that had brought about this attack from the enemy, but the angel assured him that no lives would be lost.

While everyone on board was certain that all would die, Paul displayed a calm confidence in God’s delivering power.

This April, Dennis left to preach in France and Moscow. On the flight to France, the captain announced that they were being diverted around Iceland. Dennis thought nothing of it, but it wasn’t long after he arrived in France that he found out the delay was more than a slight problem. Nearly the entire European continent had been grounded after a volcano erupted in Iceland. The ash from the volcano was polluting the air, causing air traffic to come to an abrupt halt. For five days, the skies in most European cities were silent, and Dennis’ travel to Moscow was at risk. Only God could clear the skies to get air travel moving again.

“Yet Paul didn’t panic when no one listened, nor did he gloat when later he was proven right.”

dennis & vikki burke



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Again, the Holy Spirit gave me a scripture to control this potential disaster. Psalm 78:26 records how God parted the Red Sea so the children of Israel could cross on dry ground: "He released the east wind in the heavens and guided the south wind by his mighty power." So I prayed that the Lord would once again release the east wind and guide the south wind to blow the ash away so Dennis' flight could depart as scheduled.

That's exactly what happened. While thousands remained stranded, Dennis flew to Moscow just as he had planned. God's Word will always accomplish what we send it to do (Isaiah 55:11).

Like the apostle Paul, Dennis had a divine assignment. It was crucial that my husband arrived in Moscow on time to deliver the Word God had given him for the people there.

Dennis did arrive as scheduled. He taped five days of television with Rick Renner, taught in the Bible school, and finished his ministry trip with a full day of teaching at the church on Sunday. It was reported several days after Dennis returned home that 30,000 people remained stranded all over Europe, but his schedule hadn't been disrupted at all.

A few days later, I read an article about the volcano in a news magazine. An aerial photograph showed the pattern of the ash that had only migrated east and south of Iceland. God knew exactly what needed to happen to control the situation and clear the entire continent of the dangerous ash so Dennis could complete his assignment. The wind needed to blow from the east and south, sending the ash back in the direction it came.

These are the days in which God is demonstrating His power through believers who will use their God-given authority. He wants to manifest His power through us! But first, we must be confident that disaster is never God's will. It is His goodness that leads men to repentance, not disaster (Romans 2:4). Second, we must be confident in the integrity of God's Word. He will always do what He has promised. Third, we must become skillful in using the authority God has entrusted us with. Fourth, we must keep our hearts and minds free from the world's "static" that would prevent us from discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit. And finally, we must know our God-given assignment and remain on task.

When we continually feed on God's Word, we strengthen our spirits. Instead of talking about problems when threatened with disaster, we will speak the solution. When we feed on God's Word, walk in the Word, and listen to the Word, the Word will increase and strengthen our spirits. Our foundation will be built solid and strong, and our lives won't collapse, even "though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house..." (Matthew 7:25). Instead, we'll stand boldly on the Rock of Jesus Christ in the midst of the storm, holding back disaster with the power of His Word.

Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures come from the New Living Translation of the Bible.

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