

Men and Women of Wisdom

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Solomon is found to be, without doubt, the wisest man to have ever lived. Scripture reveals his far-reaching impact in that people came from all over the known world to obtain access to the wisdom of this King. From the beginning of his reign, he is known for his ability to discern, distinguish and deliver truths that are essential to our ability to relate. Solomon's writings repeatedly point us to the pursuit of wisdom. The book of Proverbs provides foundational principles that establish and build this relationship.

The kind of wisdom we turn toward in this article is that of developing the ability of finding the understandable piece of our loved one's perspective. And, it is crucial. Without understanding, our ability to grow in wisdom is stunted, leaving us with only a small portion of the full life the Lord came to give. (John 10:10) With this promise at the forefront of our thoughts, we will see why finding the understandable part is a very important piece of the foundation of any successful relationship.

Living In Wisdom (Ephesians 5:21-6:9)

As you may know, the skill of setting aside our defensive angry response opens the door for us to communicate the value we have toward the one we love. The fifth chapter of Ephesians addresses this skill in a way that is often misunderstood. Paul begins with the exhortation to imitate Christ, describing generally how we are to walk in the love of God, in light of the Gospel, and with the wisdom these two realities bring. It is at the end of this discourse that we come to verse 21. This verse is a summation and known to be transitional in that it links the previous themes with the relationships that follow.

"...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ." (ESV)

Now, the topic of submission has been and is controversial. However, when one takes time to study how the word submit or submission is used in God's Word, it is easy to see how the word is not only misunderstood but misused.

"This word was a Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden". (www.blueletterbible.com)

Yes, there is rank and order in any system of relationships. No, I do not believe in dictatorships. Keeping the balance in which we are seeking, the word submit or

submission, relationally speaking, focuses on our conscious choice to cooperate, assume responsibility for self, and work toward a solution together with the one we are in relationship with. This is true no matter the system of relationships we participate in - for the marriage relationship, parent-child relationship, and master/slave relationship as noted further on in Ephesians.

To insist that your loved one, child, or employee is always the unreasonable one in their perspective is pure arrogance and demeaning to the uniqueness of who they are as a child of God. True humility will help us approach our loved one with an open mind and awareness that we are nothing without the work of the Cross, our foundation.

No wonder Solomon declared, *“Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction, and understanding.”* (Proverbs 23:23 ESV) My prayer is for the courage to face what I do not know (about myself or another) and willingly take the time to place aside my perspective to identify what is understandable about another’s viewpoint. Male or female, it doesn’t matter. We are to do what it takes to acquire and erect the practice of understanding.

The result is a house that has been built wisely upon a foundation of understanding, a foundation that remembers what God has done for him or her. In turn, each room will be filled with all the riches that God has intended for us to have. (Proverbs 24:3-4)

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