

Be Not Wise in Your Own Eyes

Romans 12:16b

A Salvation Testimony (Justice Mandeville)¹

“After I graduated high school, I was rejected by my family because I assaulted my dad. I was charged with battery as a misdemeanor and went to jail. After my release from jail, I found myself homeless, reduced to eating Del Taco hot sauce packets and food out of garbage cans in order to stay nourished. I was addicted to pornography and fighting. My life was a wreck physically, mentally, emotionally, but even worse, spiritually.

I ended up in a mental hospital in Highland, CA, where I was diagnosed with Schizophrenia-Affective Disorder. The pride of my heart was so bad that Satan and his demons were using it to stir my blood to make me exalt myself and think of myself as someone that I wasn't. For instance, every time I looked at the sun or thought of the sun, I would think to myself, or even speak out loud, 'I am the Bright and Morning Star.' In other words, I thought of myself as God, even over Jesus. Because my name is 'Justice,' I identified myself as the 'Angel of Justice.' I also was convinced I was a Native American from Tibet.

From a worldly perspective, I was a lunatic with schizophrenia, but in God's eyes I was a lost soul without a shepherd.

There was a group of people who ministered and preached the gospel in the mental hospital on Thursday afternoons, but God knew I wouldn't go to them and receive His Word of my own accord. I already thought I was wise enough to be God. I had all the answers and didn't need answers from anyone else, so I saw no need and had no desire to know God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Through a series of providential events, including some powerful and vivid dreams, God helped me to understand that I was living my life in an abominable way which He despised. These dreams brought me to my knees and left me crying out, "Help me, Jesus!" and asking God to show me more.

He did exactly that. Though I did not have a Bible to read, I had heard enough of the gospel message for God to work with. He began to break the pride of my heart and began to weaken the faith I had in myself and direct my faith to Jesus, leaving me with no choice but to ask Jesus to save me from the depths of my sin.

When God humbled me to the point where I asked Jesus to save me from my sins, He broke my schizophrenia. I can't speak for anyone else, but I can say with confidence that my schizophrenia was actually just the pride and self-righteousness of my heart on steroids, which Satan and his demons were using to cause me to think disoriented thoughts and to make myself out to be someone that I'm not. But when God saved me, He gave me two precious gifts: salvation and sanity, both of which enable me now to worship Jesus from a humble heart.

¹ Used with permission.

Immediately after saving me, God gave me a hunger for the wisdom of His Word and a love for Him like I never had before, making me thirst to hear His never-ending voice as He speaks to me through the Bible. I rejoiced to read Ephesians 2:8-9 which says “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is a gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” I had read this passage many times before, but Jesus was opening my eyes more clearly to see that it is only by His perfect and finished work of righteousness at the cross of Calvary that I’m saved. I contribute nothing to my salvation but the sin that made it necessary.

Jesus Christ has become my mental stability. He has sealed me with His promised Holy Spirit, who grants me access to a never-ending supply of humility, so that I can see the pride of my heart for what it really is and make war against it with the armor of His Word. Jesus now enables me to be a faithful servant to Him through His constant supply of humility, which is the virtue of all virtues. Even when I do sin against Him and break His Law, all that He asks of me is to have faith in His sacrificial death and resurrection, humble myself through repentance, turn from my sins and receive His forgiveness by faith.

If God hadn’t broken the pride of my heart and humbled me, I would still be convinced that I’m a Native American born in Tibet. I would still be in a mental hospital today, thinking that I am the Bright and Morning Star. Even worse, I would still be subject to God’s sovereign wrath. I thank God for Jeremiah 17:9, which the Lord used to enlighten me to the fact that my heart is utterly deceitful and sinful and unworthy of my trust. Jesus Christ is far more worthy of my trust than my sinful heart is.

By the riches of God’s grace, I am a part of the bride of Christ. God has made me His heir and has given me hope for a future of glory in this life and in the next, as He is my Refuge and Eternal Home. All I can do is thank Him for all that He has done and will continue to do for me. He is worthy of all glory and praise through Jesus Christ, who is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”

Romans 12:16. “...do not be haughty in mind.... Do not be wise in your own estimation.”
(NASB)

KJV. “Be not wise in your own conceits.”

NKJV. “Do not be wise in your own opinion.”

ESV. “Never be wise in your own sight.”

Definition

To be wise in your own eyes is to view yourself as already _____ wise and thus needing no additional wisdom from _____ or _____.

7 Instructions

... *to help you not to be wise in your own eyes*

#1 Realize that being wise in your own eyes is extremely _____ to your spiritual _____.

- A. Proverbs 26:12. “Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”

- B. Isaiah 5:21. “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight!”

- C. Romans 1. “(21) For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. **(22) Professing to be wise, they became fools**, (23) and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. (24) Therefore God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.”

#2 Realize that being wise in your own eyes can manifest itself in many ways, even in _____.

- A. A partial list of ways a person might be manifest the pride of being wise in his own eyes.
 - 1. You are so confident in your own wisdom that you see no need for counsel from others. “In the multitude of counselors is safety” is a proverb for lesser mortals who are not as wise as you are.
 - 2. When circumstances prove you right, you are quick to say, “I told you so,” or “I knew it,” just so others around you can make note of the fact that you had that wisdom a little bit before they did. When something doesn’t go the way you just knew it would, you let the incident slip by without comment.

3. When you hear criticism about another person, you are quick to draw conclusions about that other person without hearing the other side of the story, apparently feeling that you have sufficient wisdom to draw those conclusions.
4. You are quick to form judgments of people and situations, placing a high trust in those judgments, feeling little need to get to know the people you are judging, or to get input from others in order to adjust or complete your perspective.
5. When experiencing disagreements with others, you believe that others should re-examine their thinking while you do not need to. They should not trust their perceptions because their abilities to perceive are not as advanced as yours, but it's okay for you to trust your perceptions.
6. When people are explaining to you their perceptions regarding a matter of disagreement, you really aren't interested in listening to them. Instead, you use the time they are talking to prepare what you will say to them as soon as they stop talking. The great need of the moment is that they hear your perspective, not that you hear theirs.
7. You assume that whatever you are thinking is "wisdom." Though you would never admit it, practically speaking, you define wisdom as "thinking the way I think."
8. You are proud of your gender, because people of your gender think in a way that is superior to the opposite gender. You long for the day when your spouse becomes more mature and begins to think the way you do.
9. You feel superior to non-Christians who "just don't get it." When talking about the crazy things that non-Christian's believe and do, you frequently roll your eyes at their foolishness. If only they were as wise as you, they wouldn't think and live the way they do. If they would just open their hearts to God, like you were wise enough to do, they just might become as wise as you are about things.
10. You feel superior to people whose political viewpoints are different than yours. When among those who disagree with you, you view yourself as "the wise one" and those who differ from you are fools. When arguing politics, you aim not merely to prove that your opponents are wrong, but that they are stupid.
11. You don't see the need to make a priority out of reading and studying God's Word each day. God tells you to meditate on His word "day and night" and to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," but you don't really see the need to go to that extreme. Your lack of time in God's Word shows that you think you pretty much know what you need to know to get through each day successfully.

12. In an average week, you spend 20 hours playing computer games or surfing the net or visiting social media sites, and you spend almost no time reading God's Word. Obviously, you are pretty comfortable with your present level of wisdom.

Proverbs 26:16. "The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can give a discreet answer."

13. You do not pray for wisdom, because you don't feel like you lack it. You already have plenty of opinions about the stuff you are dealing with in your life; and you're pretty sure those opinions are wise. I mean, why else would you have those opinions if they weren't wise?

14. The Bible tells you to abstain from evil and fear sinning, yet you are not afraid of sinning. According to God's wisdom, sin is a big deal. According to your own wisdom, sin is not a big deal.

Proverbs 3:7. "Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil."

15. You willfully disobey God and do what God has prohibited. By your actions you demonstrate that you flatly disagree with God's wisdom and prefer to operate according to your own wisdom. You have no problem putting the label "good" on something that God calls "evil."

16. You submit to the ministry of a counselor only as long as his counsel is consistent with what you are already thinking. When a counselor criticizes you or contradicts your thinking, you deem him an "unwise counselor" and begin searching for a new counselor who has the good sense to agree with your perspective.

17. You think that 19 years of living has provided you with a level of wisdom that surpasses what your 50-year-old parents have attained to. Amazingly, you haven't even worked hard at pursuing wisdom, yet you just seem to have it. At 17 years of age, you now know enough to make life's most important choices without any input from your parents, whose wisdom is outdated.

18. Even when your poor choices have led to painful consequences, you still refuse to acknowledge that your unwise choices led to these consequences. Instead, you point the finger of blame at others. Amazingly, nothing is ever your fault. It's always the fault of the unwise people around you. Even your lack of wisdom is the result of other people's failure to give you the wisdom you needed.

19. The Bible says that you cannot save yourself or even make one iota of a contribution of your salvation, and that the only way of salvation is through the shed blood of Jesus. Yet you think that such a way of salvation is foolishness. Though the Bible clearly teaches otherwise, you believe that if you are good enough and wise enough and

righteousness enough, God will be impressed with you enough to want you in heaven with Him forever.

20. When involved in a discussion with others, you dominate the conversation. “Be quick to hear and slow to speak” is a maxim that applies to everyone else, but not you. You simply must speak all your mind on every matter, and you consider it a service to others to make sure that no thought of yours goes unexpressed.

B. Lit. “do not **become** wise in your own estimation”

#3 Realize that being wise in your own eyes is contrary to the _____ of _____.

A. Romans 12. “(1) I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God....(16)...do not be wise in your own estimation.”

B. Genesis 3:6. “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was **desirable to make one wise**, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

C. Romans 1. “(21)...they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (22)...they became fools...”

D. Romans 3. “(11) There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, (12) together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.”

E. Romans 3:23. “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

F. Romans 11. “(18)...do not be arrogant toward the [Jews]...(20) do not be conceited....(25)...I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery--so that **you will not be wise in your own estimation** -- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.”

#4 Realize that being wise in your own eyes is contrary to true _____.

- A. Romans 12:1. “Therefore I urge you [*pl.*], brethren [*pl.*], by the mercies of God, to present your bodies [*pl.*] a living and holy sacrifice [*sg.*], acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship.²

- B. Romans 12:9. “Let love be without hypocrisy.”

- C. How “being wise in your own estimation” is bad for community:

#5 Choose instead to be “_____ sufficiently _____” in your own eyes.

- A. Be always _____.

- B. In relationship conflict, be quick to _____ and slow to _____ and slow to _____ . (James 1:19)

- C. Young people
 - 1) Proverbs 4:7. “The beginning of wisdom is: Get wisdom! And with all your getting, acquire understanding.”

 - 2) Proverbs 2. “(3) ...cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding... (4) ...seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures....”

² “The shift from the plural *somata* (“bodies”) to the singular *thusian* (“sacrifice”) could indicate that Paul thinks of this presentation as having a corporate dimension, involving the service of the entire Christian community together.” (Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996).

D. Paul Tripp in *Age of Opportunity*. “Most teenagers simply don’t have a hunger for wisdom. In fact, most think they are much wiser than they actually are, and they mistakenly believe that their parents have little practical insight to offer. They tend to think that their parents ‘don’t really understand’ or are ‘pretty much out of it. . . . Most teenagers don’t walk into the family room and say, ‘You know, Dad, I was just thinking about how wise you are, and what a good thing it is that God put you in my life so that I could gain wisdom too. I just thought I’d come in and talk with you for a while and soak up some of the wisdom that you and I both know I desperately need.’ No, it doesn’t happen that way. Teenagers don’t tend to beg for wisdom.”³

#6 Deem God to be ultimately _____ in your _____.

A. Romans 11. “(33) Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (34) For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? (35) Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?”

B. Romans 16:27. “the only wise God” = “the wise-_____ God”

#7 Deem your fellow-Christians to be _____ in your eyes to have a perspective worth _____.

A. Romans 12:3. “I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sane judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.”⁴

B. Romans 15:14. “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.”

³ Paul Tripp. *Age of Opportunity*, chapter 5, “Parents, Meet Your Teenager.” P & R Publishing; 2 edition (June 1, 2001)

⁴ John MacArthur says, “In this context a measure of faith seems to refer to the correct measure of . . . resources best suited to fulfill one’s role in the body of Christ....every person has his own special but **limited** set of capabilities.” (MacArthur, *Romans 9-16*, Moody Publishers, 1994, 161).

- C. Proverbs 11:14 & 24:6. “in abundance of counselors there is victory.”
- D. Proverbs 15:22. “without consultation plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.”
- E. Proverbs 19:20. “Listen to counsel and accept discipline, that you may be wise the rest of your days.”
- F. Colossians 3:16. “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another....”

James 3. “(1) Let not many *of you* become teachers.... (2) Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. (14) But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and *so* lie against the truth. (15) This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, ^[i]natural, demonic. (16) For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. (17) But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

“Manhood begins in broken desperation and utter incompetence. Meekness, mourning, contrition, and weakness define where I am to begin to walk as a man before the God who created me. Letting a God-ward gaze guide my definition of manhood is freeing. It is by nature a humbling place to be, and thankfully, that's where God's eyes go.”⁵

⁵The Gospel for Life Newsletter (Ministry Report of www.gospelforlife.org with Jay Wetger), Winter 2008.