



ROUND
TABLE

A Life and Business Changing Experience

Curriculum:

Giving & Receiving Godly Counsel

THE NEED FOR BIBLICAL WISDOM



Giving & Receiving Godly Counsel



We must have an eternal perspective when giving and receiving biblical advice. All of the truly valuable counsel that we will give or receive must come from a perspective that always places a higher value on eternal things.

Each of us holds to a basic perspective on life. We either see ourselves primarily as human beings who have occasional spiritual experiences or as spirit beings who are having a temporary human experience.

The basis for the eternal perspective is knowing that each of us is a unique creation of God, here temporarily as His ambassador, to do the work He has prepared for us to do as part of His sovereign plan. As such, the greatest purpose and meaning to be accomplished in and through our lives is to fulfill His purpose. The best counsel that we can give or receive is always going to reflect that eternal perspective.

A great blessing we can give one another is to remind, encourage, or exhort each other to follow God and the way He has prescribed. This is not to say that our counsel will be impractical, but that the practical and helpful nature of our counsel flows from His Spirit and not our own wisdom.

Consider those who sit around the round table meeting with you each month: Is there more wisdom in that room than is in your car on the way to the meeting that day?

“None of us is as smart as all of us.”
- Ken Blanchard

Each round table group is a microcosm of the body of Christ, all members being different and all there to build up and strengthen one another. The potential, when properly used, is virtually unlimited. After all, God is unlimited, and each believer is a container and delivery vehicle of His wisdom. We have only scratched the surface of the true value of godly synergy and there is an enormous opportunity to expand its benefit.



5 Obstacles to Godly Counsel

There are several difficulties that we have encountered to giving and receiving godly counsel through a Truth At Work round table group:

1. Not wanting it

Sometimes, we decide what we want to do regardless of input, and simply look for confirmation rather than counsel or advice. We don't want to hear any contrary ideas or criticisms, and as a result, we are defensive to the questions, contrary ideas, or criticism that are offered.

2. Satan

The extent to which God explores this issue in His Word, demonstrates His priority on godly counsel. As such, Satan hates it and will attempt to do all he can to discourage it. Satan is called the deceiver and the father of lies (John 8:44), and one of his greatest lies is that we don't need counsel or accountability; that we can go it alone. The graveyard of spiritual failures as a result of this lie, is filled with the unmet potential of the fallen. The shame is not that the tool is unavailable, but that it is not used.

3. The unwillingness of those who possess wisdom to share it

This is the case where one member who has godly criticism withholds it out of fear of man or the desire to be liked. God teaches that the failure to warn others is a serious offense (Ezekiel 33:6). If God tells us to help another in any form, and we withhold it, we sin.



4. We don't think others understand our issues or have anything to offer

This could be rooted in pride, or we think our situation is so unique that no one else could have a fresh perspective or new ideas to offer.

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

- 1 Corinthians 10:13



5. The danger of counsel that is less godly than it is practical

There is a wisdom of the world, but it is earthly, sensual, and demonic according to James 3:15. Worldly wisdom is always appealing and can produce seemingly positive results, but the benefits ultimately result in eternal loss.

This final danger may be the greatest we face in Truth At Work. As business leaders and professionals, we naturally go to the worldly ways we have been taught our whole lives. This is our default view; we are so conditioned to do things the world's way that we often don't even realize it.

What is the world's way?

"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." - 1 Corinthians 2:14

We are all contaminated or influenced by worldly thinking, and it can easily flow into our decisions and counsel. The result is that we can often give good, practical, and pragmatic advice that is not godly at all.



5 Keys to Receiving Godly Counsel

Our ability to receive godly counsel will be greatly increased if we apply the following:

1. Have a prayerful attitude

In preparation to receiving counsel, pray to have ears to hear, a heart to learn, and the mind of Christ to discern godly from worldly counsel.

2. Check your ego at the door

Since one of the main obstacles to receiving counsel is pride, make sure you are the humble man of Proverbs, willing to hear instruction.

3. Be objective

This means you don't come to the table with your own assumptions or preconceived judgements of what answers you will hear. State your question without emotional attachment and be open to suggestions.

4. Don't be defensive

Defensiveness has two negative consequences. First, it shuts our ears to the possibility that God may be speaking to us through what is being said. We should listen to understand, not listen to respond. Secondly, our defensiveness discourages others from speaking. They would be willing to offer thoughts, but not at the price of argument or discouragement.

5. Don't be prideful in thinking you know exactly what God wants you to do

Beware of the phrase, "God told me to..." When we say that, we preclude all counsel regarding that subject. What is usually much more helpful and accurate to say is, "I think, feel, or believe that God is leading me to do..."

**Listen to
understand.**

**Don't listen
to respond.**



Giving Godly Counsel

We may recognize the importance of giving biblical counsel, but far too often we don't know the Bible well enough to do so.

In order to give godly advice, we have to stop and think, *"What does the Bible say about this? Is there a biblical principle that applies here?"* We have to intentionally think that way, make the effort, and risk going against the flow, in order to deliver what is needed.

5 Keys to Giving Godly Counsel

These five principles will facilitate our ability to give godly counsel:

1. Pray for biblical wisdom when giving counsel

God is the giver of wisdom (James 1:5), so before we can hope to offer helpful advice, we must first ask Him to give us the wisdom we need.



2. Listen carefully to the question without having predetermined solutions

To give godly counsel, we must make the effort to hear the question, and see the circumstance from an eternal perspective. Rather than simply spouting off our answer or worldly wisdom, we need to slow down and ask the question, *"What does the Bible say?"*

3. Remember that our advice may have eternal impact

There is great responsibility that comes with giving advice. It should not cause us to shrink from doing so altogether, but rather cause us to be very careful in the

nature of the counsel we give.

4. Overcome the temptation to believe that you don't have anything to offer.

God has put each of us in the situation in which He wants us. If we have the ability to help, we have the responsibility to help.



5. It takes courage to be the lone voice in giving godly advice.

The one giving godly counsel will often be a lonely voice. It is not always easily received or quickly affirmed, and it is always opposed by the evil one and his workers. Regardless, the responsibility of a counselor is to speak the truth in love. As soon as he has done so, the responsibility shifts to the one who is given the counsel. God will bless the giver for his obedience no matter what the receiver does with it.



Giving godly counsel can be greatly enhanced as we learn to approach the process with these points in mind.

There are no limits to the extent or value of the counsel that is available to us as children of God. His Spirit, alive in each of us, gives us access to His unlimited wisdom. He can and will speak to us through others who have His Spirit in them. He can speak through a donkey if need be, but thankfully, He often uses His children. We have already seen many examples of the blessings of God through counsel, but we can go so much further. We have only scratched the surface of the vastness of God's wisdom that is truly available to us as fellow believers in Christ.



ASSIGNMENT

The following is a list of questions designed to help us make godly decisions and may be used to stimulate and evaluate godly counsel. Read them and make a copy of your answers to bring with you to your round table meetings. Use this list to help you make your own decisions and help others.

- From what we read, which obstacle(s) to godly counsel do you most relate to and why?
- In regard to your involvement in the monthly round table meetings, which of the things mentioned have you personally experienced, positive or negative?
- In terms of receiving godly advice, where do you struggle?
- In terms of giving godly advice, where do you struggle?
- What issue(s) or area of your life do you currently see the need to receive godly counsel?
- How might other areas of your life (family, friends, other relationships) be affected by what we read today?