

“Choosing Wisdom”

Upon first encountering Juliet, Romeo is a man in love: “She doth teach the torches to burn bright/It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night/Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope’s ear/Beauty too rich for use/for earth too dear.” However, he is prone to impulsive behavior. Later, Friar Lawrence suggests that the marriage between Romeo and Juliet could turn the hatred between the families into pure love. Upon hearing the possibility of marriage, Romeo responds, “Let’s get out of here, I’m in a rush.” Friar Lawrence counsels to choose a better path, responding, “Wisely and slowly. They stumble that run fast.” Wisdom must order your will to choose and your impulses.

Shakespeare understood that an impulsive way of life does not teach anything about the nature of love or our responsibilities toward others. It does not encourage knowledge. Instead, our impulses, our desires, our choices must be guided by wisdom. If not, we are no better than the animals. In Psalm 32, David counsels, “Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with bit and bridle, or it will not stay near you.” Horses are without understanding. They live by impulses and instinct, and must be curbed by bit and bridle. For us to be led by our impulses and desires makes us no different than a horse or a mule. It makes us less than human. It is understanding, wisdom, and reason that pertains to our creation in the image of God. Wisdom must lead our choices.

How does one choose wisdom? First, pray for wisdom. No one is born wise. Solomon prayed for wisdom and God said, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold now I do according to your word" ([1 Kings 3:11](#)). Daniel admitted that in himself he had no wisdom ([Daniel 2:30](#)), but he said, "To thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for thou hast given me wisdom and strength, and hast made known to me what we asked of thee" ([2:23](#)). Paul prayed that the churches might be given "spiritual wisdom" ([Colossians 1:9](#)) and that they might have "a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of God" ([Ephesians 1:17](#)). James writes, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God" ([James 1:5](#)).

Second, consider the shortness of your life. Not one of us can guarantee tomorrow. It is man’s pride that makes him think he is god. But Scripture says, "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom (Psalm 90:12). “Wisely and slowly. They stumble that run fast.”

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