

Wonderful Counselor

- I. INTRO: Counsel is advice given formally
 - A. We need counsel constantly: 25% of Americans saw a counselor or received treatment in 2023, and it's on the rise. 2025 was estimated at 30%. Why?
 1. Parenting, trauma, tough choices, Marriage (50% of couples)
 2. People seek counsel for work, finances, school, and relationships
 - B. Even this week, I found myself stumped with decisions and thoughts: navigating what is good vs. what is best, where I should spend my energy, etc
 - C. All of us seek counsel, probably multiple times a week, in some form or another. The question isn't if you need counsel. The question is "where do you turn?"
 1. We usually turn to "experts":
 - a) Business owners for business
 - b) Teachers for our kids' education
 - c) Therapists for anger, trauma, and marriage help
 - d) Podcasts, influencers, books, blogs, YouTube

(1) Assuming that if you have a camera, you must be right
 - D. But we should be careful where we go. Proverbs warns us: *Proverbs 14:12 – "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."*
 1. That's sobering. See, much of the world's counsel seems wise, logical, popular, plausible... yet leads nowhere good.
 - E. If we are honest, we all do it at times. Running to blogs, books, or podcasts
 1. We turn to celebrities instead of Scripture
 2. Pop-psychology from people who openly despise God
 3. Horoscopes and AI tools instead of prayer
 4. Teenagers look to peers for advice instead of parents
 - F. As people, we are confused. Fractured. Drifting. Desperately in need of counsel.
- II. This isn't new. Ancient Israel did the same thing. They also ran to lots of other places to seek wisdom that seemed to be right, but in so doing they stopped seeking God
 - A. 2 Kings 17 describes the progression when this happened
 1. They sinned
 2. They feared other gods (instead of YHWH)
 3. They adopted pagan practices (even child sacrifice)
 4. Every man lived according to his own truth
 5. They mocked calls to repent from the prophets sent by God
 6. They became stubborn to the point of destruction
 - B. Sound familiar? This is the same trajectory in our own society
 1. Abandoning the wisdom of God, as a society, we walk towards sin. Our culture fears other gods (political correctness, idols of safety and \$\$\$, our peers, sex, whatever) and this causes us to choose vile practices (like abortion, genital manipulation, adultery, murder, mass shootings, etc).
 2. As a culture, we brag about living "my truth" and mock anyone who would call us to a higher-than-us standard

3. Refusing to repent, to turn to God's truth, we walk towards the cliff, hell-bent on our own self-destruction under the umbrella of "counsel."
- III. God spoke into their darkness in ancient Israel (and he speaks to us too)
- A. Into that darkness, God does not send better advice. He sends a Person.
 - B. *Isaiah 9:6–7 "For to us a child is born... and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace..."*
 - C. Last week: the people looked for light, and the light had a name. Here: they look for guidance, but the counselor has a name.
 - D. So often when we are stuck, we want the solution. GIVE ME THE ANSWER. Tell me what to do. Give me a new way of solving the problem. I need a new strategy, a new technique, a fresh idea.
 - E. **God's answer is not a technique, but a person → the one who is everything we lack.**
 1. Did you hear that? Let me say it again.
 - F. See, Isaiah doesn't say that "Jesus gives great advice." He says that he is the Wonderful Counselor. It's not counsel, it's the counselor.
 1. "Wonderful" → supernatural, miraculous, beyond comprehension. This is not human insight, research, or expertise; divine wisdom
 2. "Counselor" → one who gives perfect guidance. Jesus' wisdom is flawless because:
 3. Why is Jesus poised to be this Wonderful Counselor?
 - a) In Him all things were made
 - b) In Him all things hold together
 - c) He sees the whole path, the whole heart, the whole future
 4. Can you boast that? Can Oprah? Can Dr. Oz? Judge Judy? Can any brilliant doctor, therapist, or parenting guru? No.
 5. Israel listened to human counsel and collapsed.
 6. What they needed was divine counsel from the Wonderful Counselor.
 7. And we have Him. His arrival is what we celebrate at Christmas
- IV. We have him, and we still need him today
- A. My wisdom is limited and fragile.
 - B. Your wisdom is limited and fragile.
 - C. Every counselor on earth is limited and fragile.
 - D. Jesus alone is:
 1. the Word made flesh (John 1:1)
 2. Greater than Solomon
 3. Astonishing in teaching with authority (Matt 7:28–29)
 4. The Way, the Truth, the Life
 - E. Israel looked forward to Him. We look back to the cross, the empty tomb, and the ascended King. Both ancient and modern hearts need the Wonderful Counselor.
 - F. He gives:
 1. Light to darkness
 2. Clarity to decisions
 3. Peace in anxiety

4. Comfort in grief
- G. Everything people seek in counselors, Jesus fulfills perfectly through His Spirit.
- V. Will you trust Him or will you simply weigh his advice and make your own decisions?
 - A. I think of my own life before Christ...
 1. I was following my own counsel, my friends' opinions, the world's ideas.
 2. I was walking in darkness until His wisdom rescued me.
 - B. Think of your own life...
 1. Where has your counsel taken you?
 2. Where have your default strategies failed?
 3. Has YouTube wisdom carried you through, or just taught you to white-knuckle life?
 4. I'm not saying all worldly counsel is bad. I'm saying it isn't wonderful. It isn't divine. It isn't transforming.
 - C. But I know a King who can do all that—who can lead, heal, rebuild, and give hope.
 - D. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. It begins when you admit:
 1. "I don't know the way. I need the Counselor."
 - E. Consider the direction of our culture... Consider the direction of the West... Consider the unreached world...
 1. Proverbs 14:12 – "There is a way that seems right..."
 2. Proverbs 4:19 – "The way of the wicked is like darkness..."
 3. Isaiah 59:10 – "We grope like the blind..."
 - F. The world is stumbling. But the Wonderful Counselor has come and he wants to step in and rescue. He wants to save. He wants to redeem. He wants to give you future and hope.
 - G. *Titus 3:4–7 "When the goodness and lovingkindness of God our Savior appeared, He saved us... according to His mercy... that we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life."*
 - H. **God's answer is not a technique, but a person → the one who is everything we lack.**
 - I. Surrendering to **Jesus** is where counsel truly begins b/c then he will give you what you actually need!
- VI. A Blueprint for Seeking Counsel
 - A. Let's be honest, you will most likely need counsel THIS WEEK. So now I am going to be super practical and give you steps to receiving and walking in Jesus' divine wisdom.
 - B. James, Jesus' half-brother, wrote the book of James. It is classified as "wisdom literature" in the NT the way Proverbs, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon were in the OT. Here is what James wrote:
 - C. *James 1:2–8 [2] Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*
 1. Simply: Trials are good; they make you grow up.

- D. *[5] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. [6] But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. [7] For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; [8] he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

E. BLUEPRINTS FOR DIVINE COUNSEL

1. Humble yourself and ask the Wonderful Counselor

- a) You won't do this if you think you can figure it out (pride)
- b) You won't do this if you don't think Jesus is God
- c) You won't do this if you think you can just ask someone else
- d) This is a posture of your heart, realizing you need the King, Jesus

2. Have faith that God will give you wisdom

- a) *Hebrews 11:1, Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see. (NLT)*
- b) If you don't believe that God speaks, you won't ask
- c) If you don't believe the Word of God is true, you won't ask
- d) Asking requires faith. Why?
- e) *Hebrews 11:6b, Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him. (NLT)*
- f) To ask in faith means to believe that I will ask God and he will give wisdom.
 - (1) I often encourage people to pick a date, "Lord, Please give me wisdom by the end of the month," and then believe that God will do so!

3. Listen to God's voice.

- a) "I don't know how!" Yes, you do. God speaks through the Word, the church, and His Spirit, but the Spirit always speaks in line with the Word, and the church should as well.
- b) **KEY 1: What does the Word of God say?**
- c) **KEY 2: What do I need to do to obey Jesus regardless of the consequences?**
- d) The Bible normally has remarkable wisdom for almost every situation on the planet.
- e) Ex: dating
 - (1) Are they a believer?
 - (2) Are you attracted more to their face or their faith?
Hopefully both
 - (3) Are they going to help you RUN after Jesus arm in arm, or will they be dead weight?
- f) **(4) Key question: What do I need to do to obey Jesus regardless of the consequences?**
- f) Ex: Sex outside of marriage. Is premarital or extramarital (same thing) sex permissible?

(1) What does the Bible say? Clearly says no.

(2) Key question: What do I need to do to obey Jesus regardless of the consequences?

- g) For areas that aren't so cut and dry, speak with your elders, speak with veterans of the faith
- h) And then pray and trust God will guide you
- i) And when the day of decision-making arrives...

4. Do what he says.

- a) *John 14:21, Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*
- b) Simply: When we obey Jesus, he speaks louder the next time; when we ignore Jesus, his voice gets quieter. That is reason enough to obey.

F. Sometimes I think we can get paralyzed in indecision (I know I can)

- 1. A wise missionary once told me, "When you don't know the next step, think back to the last clear thing God told you to do and start there."

2. Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor

- a) He came to save us from our sins and hell
- b) He came to rescue us even from ourselves and our own bad decisions
- c) He wants to be your divine wisdom
- d) He wants to speak
- e) He wants to have that kind of relationship with you where you clearly hear his voice
- f) But it also requires US to trust and obey

G. Some of you are at the end of your rope, desperate for wisdom... **Are you turning to Jesus, or are you turning elsewhere?**

- 1. Has the Bible already clearly spoken on your circumstances in your marriage, in work, in finances, with parenting, etc?
- 2. Do you not know what the Bible says or do you just not like what the Bible says?
- 3. For some, it's a question of needing to know what the Bible says
- 4. For others, it's a question of obeying what is clearly communicated

H. Beyond those basics, God gives, by His Spirit, marching orders at times. Are you obeying or ignoring? **Let's pray for the Wonderful Counselor to speak.**