

Introduction: Within the book of Proverbs, Solomon gives wise counsel through wisdom. Those giving counsel or needing counsel can learn about their problems from the Proverbs.

1. THE BASIS OF WISE COUNSEL (What is wise counsel?)

There are five Hebrew words used by Solomon that describe wise counsel.

A. Proverbs 1:25 "**counsel**" (Hebrew " 'esa") meaning **deliberate**, purpose, determine, advice, or counsel. The emphasis seems to be on thorough "thought." Used 10 times in Proverbs. Proverbs 1:25,30; 8:14; 12:15; 19:20,21; 20:5,18; 21:30; 27:9.

"A discerning person can help another bring to the surface his true thoughts, intentions, or motives. Often a wise counselor can help a person examine his true motives -- thoughts he [the counslee] may not fully understand otherwise, (Proverbs 20:5)."

(Proverbs, by Sid S. Buzzell, in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 948)

B. Proverbs 11:14 "**counsel**" (Hebrew "ya 'as") meaning **plan**, advise or counsel. This word is related to the word counsel under point A (Hebrew " 'esa") Used 5xs in Proverbs. Proverbs 11:14; 12:20; 13:10; 15:22; 24:6.

C. Proverbs 22:20 "**counsel**" (Hebrew "mo'esa") meaning **plan** or counsel. This word is related to the word counsel under point A (Hebrew " 'esa"). It is used only once in the book of Proverbs.

D. Proverbs 1:5 "**counsel**" (Hebrew "tahbulot") meaning **skilled guidance**, good advice, wise counsel, understanding. Used only in Proverbs except for Job 37:12. Proverbs 1:5; 11:14; 12:5; 20:18; 22:20; 24:6. It is always in the plural.

"A nautical term, rope pulling and hence steering a ship."

("Tahbula" by Gerald Van Groningen in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 259)

This term "is a nautical term used of steering a ship. The 'steerings' or counsel of advisers can be helpful (cf. 15:22; 20:18; 24:6). A wise person is open to others' opinions and counsel. Without such counsel, he may make serious mistakes."

(Proverbs, by Sid S. Buzzell, in The Bible Knowledge Commentary, page 929)

E. Proverbs 15:22 "**counsel**" (Hebrew "sod") meaning "**confidential speech**, or counsel." This word comes from a Hebrew root word (Hebrew "yasar") which has the idea of laying the foundation of a building.

("ysr" by Brown, Driver, and Briggs, in A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the O.T., page 325)

"The wise and upright man who walks in the fear of the Lord will have God's secret counsel (Psalm 25:14; Proverbs 3:32; Amos 3:7; Job 15:8; 29:4).

("Sod" by R. D. Patterson in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 619)

Summary note: Counseling has the idea of advising, admonishing, instructing, teaching, guiding, correcting, and informing. This counseling is done by a wise and righteous individual (Proverbs 3:32). This counseling in Proverbs is based on the wisdom of sound judgment (Proverbs 8:14) which is God's Word (Proverbs 22:19-21).

"From Proverbs 19:20-21 we understand that the counsel the godly man is urged to listen to is the 'counsel of the Lord' which will stand in contrast to the many 'plans in a man's heart.'"

("Ya'as" by Paul R. Gilchrist as found in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 391)

2. THE BESTOWING OF WISE COUNSEL (Who should provide wise counsel?)

Today the thought is that only "professionals" should counsel. Notice the following:

- A. Proverbs 1:8; 4:1 = as a father
- B. Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6 = a multitude with insight
- C. Proverbs 13:10 = an advisor
- D. Proverbs 27:9 = as a friend

3. THE BEARER OF WISE COUNSEL (What qualities should a wise counselor possess?)

The counselor should possess certain qualities in order to give wise counsel.

- A. Proverbs 12:5 = righteousness
- B. Proverbs 4:18 = ability to see the right path
- C. Proverbs 11:13; 25:9 = ability to keep a confidence
- D. Proverbs 15:28 = ability to know when to give answers
- E. Proverbs 16:21,23-24 = ability to use tactful speech
- F. Proverbs 18:13,15 = ability to listen
- G. Proverbs 18:17 = ability to probe and examine
- H. Proverbs 20:5 = ability to understand and analyze

4. THE BURDEN FOR WISE COUNSEL (What is the importance of seeking wise counsel?)

The burden to possess wise counsel is seen in the following verses:

- A. Proverbs 11:14 = there is the danger of falling into sin.
- B. Proverbs 15:20 = there is the disappointment of not meeting a goal..
- C. Proverbs 15:22 = there is the distress of plans going astray.
- D. Proverbs 19:20 = there is the discomfort in the quality of life when reaching old age.

5. THE BARRIERS TO WISE COUNSEL (What will hinder wise counsel?)

There are many barriers to finding wise counsel.

- A. Proverbs 1:25 = disdain for wise counsel is a barrier to having wisdom.
- B. Proverbs 1:30 = not wanting wise counsel is a barrier to having wisdom.
- C. Proverbs 12:15 = not heeding wise counsel is a barrier to having wisdom.
- D. Proverbs 13:10 = pride is a barrier to having wisdom.

E. Proverbs 19:21 = listening to bad advice is a barrier to having wisdom.

6. THE BANKRUPTCY OF UNWISE COUNSEL (What is wrong with unwise counsel?)

There are serious deficiencies in unwise counsel.

A. Proverbs 4:19 = ignorance: not knowing why he or she follows a foolish choice.

B. Proverbs 12:5 = deceitfulness: counsel that tell lies and misleads people.

C. Proverbs 12:15; 3:7 = self-centeredness: to be wise in your own eyes. (cf. Proverbs 3:5)

7. THE BENEFITS OF WISE COUNSEL (What are the benefits of wise counsel?)

There are benefits for finding wise counsel.

A. Proverbs 11:14 = safety

B. Proverbs 12:18 = health

C. Proverbs 12:20 = joy

D. Proverbs 15:22 (20:18) = realization of goals

E. Proverbs 24:6 = confidence and safety

F. Proverbs 27:9 = sweetness (pleasantness)

Conclusion: All Christians need wisdom and wise counsel (meaning advice, guidance, and instruction from righteous individuals who use God's Word).