

The World's Wisdom Is Foolishness

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | January 7, 2021



“Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” (1 Corinthians 1:20 NIV84).

What is the basis of all wisdom? God and the knowledge of God, which means His character, His design laws, His methods, purposes, protocols – how reality works and why

Satan is the father of lies, and this world is his domain. This world is the lair of liars, the domain of deceivers, the fountain of frauds – the dark hole of deceit where God’s kingdom of truth and love is obscured. What this world considers wisdom is foolishness because it is contrary to reality, contrary to the way God’s kingdom works.

Examples of the world’s wisdom being foolishness:

- There is no God; godless evolution is how life originated.
- There is no male or female; gender is based on how one feels.[\[*\]](#)
- There is no objective truth; what I think or feel is truth.

Examples of God’s wisdom being seen as foolishness to the world and how the world is truly foolish:

Giving to Others

Jesus said, “Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8 NIV84), and Luke wrote in Acts, “... remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35 NIV84).

God’s kingdom is the kingdom of love, of beneficence, of giving to others. It is the principle upon which our God of love has built life to operate. The more you give, the more you receive – the more we love others, the more we grow in love and the more of God’s love flows through us to others. This is the circle of love, of life, of giving that health is built upon, such as our breathing – we get more air by exhaling and giving away what we have taken in. Every living system only lives as it gives; the more one gives, the more one lives.

But this is foolishness to the world, which is based upon fear and selfishness. The wisdom of the world says that the more one takes, hoards, and stores up, the more one has. To the world, giving away what you have means that you have less, not more. Thus, the world promotes taking from others to advance self. That is why in all kingdoms of the world, throughout all history, the masses are taken from to support a few ruling elites. It is only God’s kingdom where the ruler leaves His throne and gives all that heaven has to uplift the masses.

Dying to Self

Jesus said, “Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it” (Luke 17:33 NKJV).

The kingdom of God is the kingdom of love, of other-centeredness, of loving others more than self. Satan’s kingdom is the kingdom of fear and selfishness, of survival of the fittest, of me-first, of kill or be killed. Eternal life is found in surrendering self to Jesus and dying to fear, dying to selfishness, of trusting one’s existence to God. This is what the Bible means when it talks about being crucified with Christ. It is about surrendering our need to protect self in trust to God, of dying to the selfish motives that seem so right to this world, and being reborn with heart motives that love others more than self.

Thus, those who lose their sinful, fear-ridden, selfish life in a trust relationship with Jesus will receive a new heart and right spirit and be reborn into God’s kingdom of love and receive eternal life – they find their true life. But those who, consumed by fear, cling to selfishness and continue to advance the survival drive of “me first” and refuse to die to self – but instead are willing to coerce others, dominate others, control others, take from others, and ultimately kill others to “save” their own lives – will lose their lives because they will remain infected with selfishness and die eternally.

The world’s wisdom is truly foolishness to God.

Most Christians have no problem acknowledging the wisdom found in the Bible stories and taught by Jesus and applied to the people of His day. Where we struggle is in taking those same Bible principles and applying them to ourselves – to our situations and circumstances. In the next section, we are going to do just that: apply God’s wisdom to expose worldly foolishness regarding recent events.

Judging Others

Jesus said, “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be

judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1, 2 NIV84).

And God said through his spokesman Samuel, "The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1Samuel 16:7 NIV84).

Over the past several years, I have seen a lot of Christians writing and speaking about judging the "character" of a certain political leader. I have been frustrated to watch this because it has had the appearance of wisdom and, therefore, many honest-hearted seekers of truth have listened to them. But was it the wisdom of God or the foolishness of this world?

I purposely chose not to address this issue prior to the recent election because I was concerned that my words would be too easily misconstrued as being political, advocating or promoting a particular political candidate, which I had and have no intention of doing. Despite what I saw going on, I have waited until now to address it so that my comments will be taken in their intended light: to help people develop discernment skills and become efficient in applying God's methods.

In the next four sections below, I breakdown why it is foolish to think that we could know the character of a politician and how to apply godly wisdom to discern through the hyperbole.

Public Persona

One of the principles of God's kingdom is that man looks on the outward appearance - the behaviors, the deeds, the history - but God looks on the heart. This means we cannot truly judge another person's character or heart; only God can. But more than this, we cannot know a person through the media, we cannot know someone through the reports of others, and we cannot know someone without actually *knowing* someone.

During the recent election season, many Christians conducted lectures and wrote articles about the character of one of the candidates, but as far as I know, not one person doing so personally knew him. This means that they were making their conclusions based on a public persona filtered through various media outlets with imperfect and partial information; these conclusions were often further distorted by the biases of the reporters.

We cannot know a person's character from the media; even when we see that person speaking, it is still a public persona, acted and presented for effect. We still don't know the heart.

Consider the way some take God's actions in the Old Testament and God's own words, which were sometimes thundering and threatening, and have created a false picture of God - why? Because they don't actually know God.

Remember Moses standing on Sinai when God thundered and all the people trembled, but Moses told them that they didn't need to be afraid of God (Exodus 20:20). Why wasn't Moses afraid when God thundered? Because Moses *knew* God personally, knew His heart, character, methods, and motives, and the people had only *heard about* God - they didn't yet know Him for themselves.

When we come to know God personally, we will become friends of God, and like Moses, we too will no longer be afraid of Him even when He thunders. We will be able to read all the stories in the Old Testament and see a God of love acting in mercy to save all who will let Him.

Or consider the actor Bill Cosby before his public trial and conviction – what was the common public perception of his character? But peoples’ views of him were all based upon a carefully crafted public persona, which the evidence presented at his trial exposed as false.

Historic Facts

Let’s now consider taking historic facts of confirmed sin as evidence of someone’s character today; for instance, confirmed visits with a prostitute.

Is it wisdom or foolishness to think we can use someone’s historic sins as evidence of their character today?

Many Christians during this last election cycle thought it was wisdom to use past sins as evidence of character. If this were truly wisdom, what if we had a case of a confirmed murderer? Wouldn’t that be proof positive of bad character and reveal that we should not accept the murderer as our leader? Then what about when Moses returned to lead the Hebrews out of Egyptian bondage; should the Hebrew captives have rejected him for having “bad character” because he was a known murderer? Or what of King David, after Bathsheba and Uriah? When was David’s character the most godly, the most mature – before or after the Bathsheba and Uriah incident? *It was after!* That incident brought him to the point of true repentance, and it was then that he became a man after God’s own heart.

The Christian who looks to past mistakes, without asking the question of whether there is evidence of Christian repentance and maturing of character, is being foolish.

Interpersonal Style, Demeanor, Conduct

What about when we see with our own eyes that someone is being rude, blunt, insensitive to others; wouldn’t that be reliable evidence of bad character? After all, the Bible says that the fruits of the Spirit are “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22, 23 NIV84); thus anyone who is blunt, direct, doesn’t seem to have a lot of empathy, or says things that come across as hurtful or rude must have bad character, right? Not necessarily – again, if you don’t know them personally, if you don’t know their heart, you simply don’t know.

What if the person has Asperger’s syndrome? I have many patients with this disorder, and they are good-hearted people who have high morals. They want to do the best job they can, but they have brains that don’t see interpersonal cues. They don’t empathize like others do, so they are direct. In their mind, it is important to do things right; to them, it is about the tasks, the fixing of problems, the solutions, the goals, the outcomes, or the mission; they don’t process feelings or the importance of relationships or how others will react. In their mind, if the goal is achieved, it is a win. And most of the time, with good hearts, intending to help, they come across to others as blunt, rude, uncaring, and even mean, when they are not meaning to be so – and the higher their intelligence, the worse their interpersonal style typically is, even when their motive is to help people because they care about them.

Have you ever seen the television program *Bones*? The main character, Temperance Brennan, is an anthropologist who is very compassionate but who is depicted as someone with Asperger’s-type syndrome, and even though she intends well, she frequently speaks bluntly, without regard to feelings, and comes across as rude and offensive.

To judge someone else’s character without actually knowing them personally is foolish – yet many

Christians get caught up in doing this and, thus, are easily manipulated by the media and others.

When choosing people to do certain tasks but with whom you haven't built a personal relationship over time, a better approach than foolishly thinking we know their character is to assess the person's ability for the position for which they are being considered, based on the evidence of their effectiveness to fulfill that role.

For instance, consider that you need a heart surgeon for one of your parents who needs emergency bypass surgery, and the two surgeons available the night you must consult one are:

Surgeon one, who has a proven record of the lowest post-surgical infections, shortest hospital stays, fewest days on a ventilator, and highest percentage of survival in the region. But he is also a known philanderer. He has been divorced three times, having had multiple affairs, and it was even reported that he had visited prostitutes; he is also reported to be blunt and rude to the nursing staff.

Surgeon two, who has higher post-surgical infections than surgeon one; his patients spend an average of five days longer in the ICU and a week longer in the hospital; and his patients have a slightly lower survival rate. But he is also an elder in his church and, by all accounts, is happily married to his only wife for 30 years; the hospital staff also rave about how kind he is to everyone.

Which surgeon would you consult for your parent? Would your concerns about character determine your choice?

Boundaries

Finally, let's address the issue of boundaries – utilizing information where it is intended to be utilized and not where it was not meant to be used. The Bible gives standards on character *for church leaders and spouses*. In both circumstances, it is understood that we are able to apply this Bible standard *because we have personal relationships with the people whom we are choosing for church leadership or as a spouse*. This means we actually know them and can make judgments about their maturity of character for the roles for which we are considering them.

However, the Bible gives no such instructions (standards for character) when choosing a politician for office in a worldly government – why? Because we will almost never know them personally and will not have accurate information to assess their character. Therefore, we are to decide based on the objectives of their public policy platform, track record of accomplishment in achieving what they said they would accomplish, and evidence of possessing the skill set necessary for the role.

So, by all means, use the biblical standards for character when choosing elders, deacons, pastors, and spouses – but don't be duped into believing you can know the character of people you don't actually know.

[*] This is not a reference to homosexuality, but male and female gender. Gay men are male. Lesbian women are female. Homosexuality is about attraction, not gender.
