

# Pearls of Wisdom!

June 20, 2007

As hard as it may seem to imagine it's been almost 29 years since walking down the aisle at the Collinsville High gymnasium to move the tassel from one side of the graduation cap to the other, and be handed a diploma to certify completion in the 12 year course of public education. From that day to the present there have been many challenging moments in life that have resulted in successes as well as failures; thankfully the former outnumber the latter! Indeed there have been lessons in life that have been learned "the hard way"! O what a teacher "the hard way" has been through the years! Some of these lessons no doubt could have been prevented if only there had been the longing, searching, and acquisition of the wonderful pearls of wisdom which God's word unveils (Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-5).

Contrary to what some may think, this writer does not consider himself to be "elderly" by any stretch of the imagination. Admittedly, however, he is no "spring chicken" either. And regardless your opinion about the matter he would like to take this opportunity to share some pearls of wisdom that he has learned through the years that perhaps could be helpful to others. While these "pearls" could be reflected upon by most age groups, it is intended to be more directed to the younger folks with hope of helping you not make the same mistakes that others who precede you have made.

Suggested below are four "pearls of wisdom" that if diligently pursued can be extremely beneficial to enhancing one's spiritual maturity. One would do well to treasure these precious pearls on the journey of life. Remember...

**1. "It Is Better To Be Silent and Thought A Fool Than To Speak and Remove All Doubt".** This adage was on a poster hanging on the wall in my 10th grade English class and has stuck with me through the years. For nearly 180 days in the 1975/76 school year there was a constant reminder that to "think before you speak" is not good enough. One needs to do more than "think" and "speak"; sometimes after thinking it's best to refrain from speaking at all. In many cases, this maxim has kept me from being the sinner (and the fool) of Proverbs 10:19 where one finds this 'Pearl of Wisdom' - ***"In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise" and "Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him"*** (Proverbs 29:20). Upon these two verses the lines of distinction between a wise person and one who is a fool is easily seen. Sadly, the hearer can more readily identify the

difference between the two than he who is the speaker.

**2. Things Are Not Always As They Appear.** As far back as the mid-1970's I can remember seeing the convex mirrors on the passenger side door of many vehicles inscribed with the warning, "Objects In Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear". Due to the convexity of the mirror it gives the driver a wider angle of view to help overcome the blind spots on the right side of the vehicle while driving and changing lanes, and thus to help avoid accidents. Though intended to be a matter of safety it unfortunately gives the false impression that the objects in the mirror are more distant than they really are.

As incredibly hard to believe as it is, there are times in life that some things (like the objects in a side-view mirror) are just not what they first "appear" or "seem" to be. For a Christian this is important to learn; and the younger one learns it the better it'll be for all concerned! Sometimes it's easier to jump to conclusions or evil surmise than it is to inquire about the facts. Evil surmising is sinful (1 Timothy 6:4) and one should not be too quick to form an opinion or draw a conclusion without first getting all the facts. The 'Pearl of Wisdom' to remember is from Proverbs 18:13 which states, "**He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him**". For one to assume wrong-doing of another, to impugn another's motive, or to make judgment without knowing the facts is shameful! Remember, "love thinks no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:5). "**Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment**" (John 7:24).

**3. "Unresolved Conflicts Don't Go Away"** was a statement made about 20 years ago that, at that time, this much younger (and greener) preacher heard from a much wiser seasoned preacher. The context of this statement was centered around dealing with problems between two or more people, and that in order to put conflicts once and for all in the past there needs to be a diligent effort to resolve them. If there is no resolution, most likely there will be a resurrection of the conflict, perhaps in a different context and with the potential to reap even greater havoc. This is the case with parents overlooking the wrongful behavior in their children at a tender age. Subsequently they will have greater issues with their sons and daughters in their teenage years and beyond. This is also the case with brethren in the church. When one does not demonstrate the reconciliatory spirit of forgiveness between each other the problem is bound to be revisited again at the first opportunity. Jesus said, "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with

him..." (Matthew 5:23-25). Unless diligent effort is quickly made to agree (reconcile) with brethren that have aught against each other there is going to be ramifications that will even affect one's worship when he "brings his gift to the altar". This pearl is found in Proverbs 25:9, "**Debate you case with you neighbor, and do not disclose the secret to another**".

**4. "Seek Out From Among You...Men of Good Reputation, Full of Wisdom"**. These were the words directed to the church in Acts 6:3 when considering the appointment of men to carry out certain affairs of the church. The fundamental idea worthy of emphasis is this, from spiritual men spiritual leadership is given; and from these men should spiritual truths be sought. From whom do you seek wisdom, wise instructors or foolish contemporaries? To whom do you go for advice and spiritual guidance, a wise leader in the kingdom, or a worldly friend your equal? Solomon's son, Rehoboam, rejected the instructions of the elders who stood before his father and instead hearkened to the friends with whom he grew up. This and other factors led to the demise of the united kingdom which existed under the reigning years of Saul, David, and Solomon. Read 1 Kings 12. and subsequent chapters to find out the rest of the story! Remember that Job initially maintained his integrity in dealing with the many infirmities that he encountered, but when he started listening to his friends his faith became weakened. "**Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom**" (James 3:13). "**A wise man will hear and increase learning. And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel**" (Proverbs 1:5) Be careful whose council you seek, the "pearl" you search for may come from swine and not from shepherds!