

Noble Counsel

*But the noble man devises noble plans;
And by noble plans he stands.
Isaiah 32:8*

*Many are the plans in a man's heart,
But the counsel of the Lord, it will stand.
Proverbs 19:21*

Last lesson we studied and defined a “noble man” and his “noble plans.” We learned that God’s definition of a noble man is the man who loves the Lord with all of his heart, mind, soul and strength, and is selflessly committed to following Jesus wherever he leads. We learned that the plans of a noble man are focused on God’s interests, not man’s, on eternal things, not temporal things. We applied these principles to our businesses, desiring to be noble businessmen implementing noble business plans, starting with a vision or purpose statement for your business that reflects God’s interests.

This lesson we will study how the noble man devises noble plans, focusing on **noble counsel** for the noble man.

Proverbs 20:18

18 Prepare plans by consultation, and make war by wise guidance.

Proverbs 15:22

22 Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed.

Proverbs 11:14

14 Where there is no guidance, the people fall, but in abundance of counselors there is victory.

OBSERVE

Lets observe what God says about the role of counselors in our planning.

Leader: Read the CONTEXT box and read Proverbs 20:18, 15:22 and 11:14 and have the group say aloud and mark “consultation,” “counselors,” and “guidance.”

CONTEXT

Remember that wisdom literature such as Proverbs describes God’s general design – how things will usually work out – thus, it is wise to follow these principles. Proverbs is not a book of promises to be claimed or doctrine to be insisted upon.

DISCUSS

Generally speaking, what happens to our plans with, and without, counsel?

Proverbs 12:5

5 The thoughts of the righteous are just, but the counsels of the wicked are deceitful.

Proverbs 10:31-32

31 The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, but the perverted tongue will be cut out.

32 The lips of the righteous bring forth what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked, what is perverted.

1 Corinthians 3:19-20

19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is the One who catches the wise in their craftiness";
20 and again, "The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless."

Psalms 1:1-2

1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night.

How is this counsel described?

OBSERVE

Lets dig a bit further into the kind of counsel the Lord is advising us to seek in making our plans.

Leader: Read Proverbs 12:5, Proverbs 10:31-32, 1 Corinthians 3:19-20, Psalm 1:1-2, and have the group say aloud and mark "counsel(s)" and also "wisdom."

Take a couple of minutes and complete the chart below on your own.

DISCUSS

What kind of people should we seek counsel from, and whom should we avoid? Why? List what you learn from the four passages that we just read, following the example given.

	SEEK	AVOID
Proverbs 12:5	From the righteous (those in right standing with God) because their thoughts are just (right).	The wicked (those in wrong standing with God) because their counsels are deceitful (not right).
Proverbs 10:31-32		
1 Corinth 3:19-20		
Psalms 1:1-2		

Psalm 16:7

7 I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.

Psalm 119:24

24 Thy testimonies also are my delight; they are my counselors.

Joshua 1:8

8 This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

John 14:26

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

2 Chronicles 18:1-13

1 Now Jehoshaphat had great riches and honor; and he allied himself by marriage with Ahab.
2 And some years later he went down to visit Ahab at Samaria. And Ahab slaughtered many sheep and

Leader: Read Psalm 16:7, Psalm 119:24, Joshua 1:8, and John 14:7 and say aloud and mark "counseled," "counselors," and "Helper."

DISCUSS

What, and Whom, should be our primary counselor?

How do we receive this counsel?

OBSERVE

Lets look at an example from the life of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

Leader: Read the CONTEXT box, and then read 2 Chronicles 18:1-13 and have the group say aloud and mark "inquire."

CONTEXT
<p>The nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms after the reign of Soloman, with the ten northern tribes calling themselves Israel, and the 2 southern tribes calling themselves Judah. Ahab king of Israel was exceedingly wicked, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah was good in the sight of the Lord.</p>

oxen for him and the people who were with him, and induced him to go up against Ramoth-gilead.

3 And Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go up with me against Ramoth-gilead?" And he said to him, "I am as you are, and my people as your people, and [we will be] with you in the battle."

4 Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire first for the word of the Lord."

5 Then the king of Israel assembled the prophets, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for God will give [it] into the hand of the king. "

6 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not yet a prophet of the Lord here that we may inquire of him?"

7 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me but always evil. He is Micaiah, son of Imla." But Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so."

8 Then the king of Israel called an

DISCUSS

Evaluate how well both Ahab and Jehoshaphat followed the principles we have learned about seeking noble counsel.

Principle	Ahab	Jehoshaphat
Wise to seek counsel when making plans for war.		
Seek first the counsel of the Lord.		
Only seek counsel from godly counselors.		
Do not heed the counsel of men when it contradicts the counsel of God.		

Ask a member to read 2 Chronicles 18:14-34 for the "rest of the story."

Did Jehoshaphat heed the counsel of the Lord? What happened to him?

Did Jehoshaphat learn from this mistake? *Ask a member to read 2 Chronicles 20:1-4 and 20:14-15,24.*

OBSERVE

Understanding now that noble counsel is always rooted in the Word of God, and in men rooted and wise in the Word of God, and that it is wise to seek such counsel, is there ever a time not to heed or even seek the counsel of godly men?

Leader: Read the CONTEXT box and then read Acts 20:22-24, 21:4 and 23:11 and have the group say aloud and mark "Spirit" and "Lord."

officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah, Imla's son."

9 Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in [their] robes, and [they] were sitting at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them.

10 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made horns of iron for himself and said, "Thus says the Lord, 'With these you shall gore the Arameans, until they are consumed.'"

11 And all the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for the Lord will give [it] into the hand of the king."

12 Then the messenger who went to summon Micaiah spoke to him saying, "Behold, the words of the prophets are uniformly favorable to the king. So please let your word be like one of them and speak favorably."

13 But Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, what my God says, that I will speak."

CONTEXT

The apostle Paul felt compelled to go to Jerusalem. As he was making his way there, godly and Spirit-filled men in every city warned him that bonds and affliction awaited him. Their earnest counsel was for Paul not to go!

DISCUSS

Did Paul's counselors correctly discern what was going to happen to Paul in Jerusalem?

Why didn't Paul heed the counsel of these godly men?

What principles regarding giving and receiving counsel do we learn from this example in Scripture?

INSIGHT

Oswald Chambers, author of My Utmost for His Highest, wrote "Never ask the advice of another about anything God makes you decide before Him. If you ask advice, you will nearly always side with Satan."

Acts 20, 21, 23

20:22 "And now, behold, bound in spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,

20:23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.

20:24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

21:4 And after looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.

23:11 But on the night immediately following [his arrest and confinement in the Roman barracks], the Lord stood at his side and said, "Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness to me at Rome also.

Do you think Paul would agree with Oswald Chambers? *Leader: Ask a member to read from his Bible Galatians 1:11-18, Acts 11:1-2, and Matthew 16:21-24.*

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES DISCOVERED

This is a list of the truths that we discovered inductively from God's Word:

- A **Noble man** devises **Noble plans** by **Noble counsel**.
 - It is wise to seek counsel in making our plans.
 - We should first seek the counsel of the Lord through prayer, the study of God's Word, and the teaching and leading of our primary counselor, the Holy Spirit.
 - Seek counsel from noble men, men whose counsel is rooted in the wisdom of God's Word, not the foolish wisdom of the world.
 - Noble counselors are those who point you to the Word of God and use their wisdom and experience to help you apply the principles therein.
 - Do not seek a "second opinion" from men when God has clearly counseled you, especially when the "conventional wisdom" says otherwise.
 - Do not heed the counsel of men, even godly men, if it contradicts the counsel you have received from God.
- God promises that a **Noble man** will be able to **stand by his Noble plans**, because noble plans are God's plans, and God's plans cannot be frustrated. Recognize, however, that Satan will not sit idly by and let you carry out God's plans without a fight.

BUSINESS APPLICATION

1. Spend time every day in God's Word, pray specifically and earnestly about your business plans and decisions, ask for God's wisdom, and diligently do what He shows you to do.
2. Select your counselors carefully and seek counsel from them when you make your business plans to execute God's noble plan for your business. Take advantage of your Forum brothers – a primary purpose of this ministry!
3. Test all counsel with the Word of God – does it contradict the Word of God and is it rooted in the Word of God?
4. When you are asked to give counsel, seek first the counsel of the Lord in prayer and the Word of God, and then share God's counsel on the matter. Carefully discern between your counsel from God's Word (This is what the Bible clearly teaches ...) and your counsel on how to apply it in a particular business situation (You might consider applying that biblical principle by doing ...).