



Finishing Well: Growing in Wisdom

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I want to be a leader who finishes well. I want to see other leaders finish well. I'm more and more convinced that one of the keys to finishing well is the ability to grow in wisdom. Leaders who are intentional about growing in wisdom will have a higher likelihood of finishing well.

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Wisdom is one of those words we throw around a lot, but it's hard to define. The Hebrew word for wisdom (Hokma) refers to "skill" or "expertise". My Old Testament professor, Dr. Louis Stulman taught us that wisdom was skill for living, being able to live life as God designed it to be lived. Of course, Jesus was the wisest person to ever live. He demonstrated life as it was meant to be lived – fully loving and obeying His Father while perfectly loving others.

So how do we grow in wisdom as leaders? My friend Mark Matlock, former executive director of Youth Specialties and one of the best students of wisdom that I know, shares that there are two primary ways of gaining wisdom: 1) experience and 2) through a human mediator. So we gain wisdom when we go to the school of hard knocks by experiencing life and we gain wisdom when someone wiser than ourselves helps us learn from their experience.

Are you growing in wisdom from your experience as a leader? There are lots of folks out there who continue to experience the same thing over and over again, yet fail to acquire much wisdom from the experience. Are you able to pull away from your experience and evaluate what's happening and ask "what do I need to learn from this experience?" Years ago I gained some dishwashing wisdom: don't use liquid soap in the dishwasher – it creates a royal mess. Sadly, it took more than one experience to gain this wisdom, but I now know that it's a bad idea to use liquid soap in the dishwasher.

What do you need to learn from your experience in order to acquire wisdom? What are the things that keep happening over and over again in your life or ministry simply because you've failed to learn from your experience?

Who is a wise leader who can help you grow in wisdom? You don't have to learn all your leadership lessons through the school of hard knocks. Who are the people that God has placed in your life that model skill or expertise in living? Invite them to speak into your life. Ask them to share from the wealth of their wisdom and experience. It's a scary thing to ask for help, but if we're going to grow in wisdom, we need the help of others to do so.

Proverbs 4:7 says "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get

understanding.” The search for wisdom is worth the effort and risk. Who do you need to take a risk with today by inviting them to share their wisdom with you.

One of the keys to finishing well is growing in wisdom. How are you going to grow in wisdom today?

Christ's Peace,

Lance