

HOW TO FIND HELPFUL ADVICE BY FAITH

Level Up. Episode 5. Published: July 19, 2023

Introduction

Welcome to Level Up, episode 5, the podcast that discusses our life in Christ.

Today, I'd like to talk about how to find helpful advice by faith.

I find life incredibly complicated and challenging.

There are so many things I don't know how to do. For example, this summer has been warm and rainy, so weeds have overtaken my long gravel driveway. They grew so fast, and I've no idea how to beat them back. If I spray them, different weeds take their place. This is a parable of my life. The list of things I don't know how to do is long and growing, and I know I'm not alone.

The Benefits of Wisdom

In this article, I share some ideas about finding helpful advice by faith. Whether facing a difficult decision, struggling with a personal problem, or simply seeking direction, the right counsel or advice can save us from wasted time, lost finances, relational disappointments, and foolish mistakes.

Searching for wisdom is always beneficial. The Bible says, "Joyful is the person who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her wages are better than gold" (Proverbs 3:13-14, NLT).

Here's how to find helpful advice when we need it:

How To Find Helpful Advice by Faith

1. Ask the Lord for wisdom.

This is an obvious yet neglected step. The Bible encourages us to seek the Lord's insights: "If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking" (James 1:5, NLT).

The James passage continues with a condition for receiving the Lord's wisdom: We must ask with the intention of applying what he shares (verses 6-8). That makes sense since the Lord is wise without limits; he never gets it wrong: "Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge!" (Romans 11:33, NLT).

There is no need to make it complicated; an open mind and a simple prayer for wisdom will do the job: "Father, I don't know what to do in this situation. Please give me the wisdom to do what is best for my good and your glory. Thank you. Amen."

OK. We've asked for wisdom from the Source. Now what? How will the Lord answer the prayer? How do we receive his wisdom?

2. Gain wisdom in the Bible.

The most obvious answer is to search the written Word of God, the Bible. Prayerful reading and meditation on passages will produce insights that increase our wisdom.

While the entire Bible is helpful, Jesus' teachings recorded in the four Gospels are a goldmine of insights and a useful place to begin the search for wisdom. You could start with Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, chapters 5-7.

Two free online tools for finding the Bible's teaching on topics are:

- Nave's Topical Bible: <https://www.naves-topical-bible.com>
- OpenBible: <https://www.openbible.info>

I often type into Google's search box: "What does the Bible say about (insert topic)? Usually, the OpenBible site is the first result. The results can be helpful, but you must prayerfully read, interpret, and apply them using proper study steps.

For more information on Bible study steps, read the following online articles:

- <https://www.crossway.org/articles/7-step-approach-to-in-depth-bible-study/>
- <https://www.navigators.org/resource/how-to-study-the-bible/>
- <https://www.olivetree.com/blog/7-step-bible-study-methods/>

A good study Bible can also prove helpful. I have three go-to study Bibles: The NIV Zondervan Study Bible, the ESV Study Bible, and the NLT Illustrated Study Bible.

3. Gain wisdom from wise people.

The OT book of Proverbs not only contains wise insights from God's perspective but is also full of encouragement to ask for advice. For example:

- Proverbs 12:15 (NLT) Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to others.
- Proverbs 15:22 (NLT) Plans go wrong for lack of advice; many advisers bring success.
- Proverbs 19:20 (NLT) Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life.

There are several ways to find wise people. Here are three:

Look for a wise person from your circle of family and friends. This may not be the chattiest person, but whenever they speak, it feels right. Of course, you still need to compare their insights with the Bible's teachings. Consider meeting regularly with a friend from church who is further along in their Christian journey.

Connect with a pastor, theologian, author, podcaster, or influencer. If you happen to know one, that's great. But you don't have to ever meet them. Instead, you can enlist them as mentors by reading, listening, or watching their material. I often turn to DesiringGod.org to find helpful insights on practical Christian living. In my early years in pastoral work, I benefited from the writings of the

late Martyn Lloyd Jones. My first pastor, William Still, had a massive influence on my life during my college years.

Pay attention to the Lord Jesus. He is the embodied wisdom of God. His words and deeds form a collection of wisdom that will never be surpassed. The apostle Paul wrote, "I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2-3, NLT).

Every Christian should study Jesus in depth. We should master his teachings and meditate on everything he did and is doing.

A helpful way to grow in your knowledge of Jesus is to study the Gospel of John carefully. There is also a list of Jesus-focused books on the Cornerstone's Jesus page: <https://www.famousgod.com/jesus>. The better we know Jesus and about Jesus, the wiser we'll be.

Conclusion

I hope this brief discussion helps you grow in wisdom to navigate life's challenges for your good and God's glory.