

MORE NOTES ON WISDOM (OR THE FACTOR OF EIGHT)

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THE NEED OF PATIENCE

My contemplation on the subject of “WISDOM” continues to throw up land mines and grenades of truth aimed at destroying preconceptions and misconceptions of firstly what Wisdom is, and secondly, how to obtain Wisdom.

Initially I was quite comfortable in accepting the apostle James recommendation that if I asked for Wisdom of the “Giving God” then it was simply a matter of being handed my certification from Father wherein I evidenced this enviable characteristic to all and sundry!!!

You will have noted from the study “FACTOR OF EIGHT” that my misconceptions in this matter clearly declared my naiveté. And so I set about to engage those Christlike characteristics which formulate “WISDOM”. It was only then that I found that when Father gives me wisdom He needs to be sure that he has not wasted this precious commodity and so he makes many opportunities for me to evidence that the Wisdom he has given me is being “gainfully employed”.

Let me quickly refresh our minds of the ubiquitous “Factor of Eight” virtues that constitute “the wisdom from above”.

- Pure
- Peaceable
- Gentle
- Accommodating (or easily entreated)
- Full of mercy
- Good fruit
- Impartial
- Not hypocritical

You will, as I have, experienced the “pricks and goad’s” that Father uses to identify the improvements in my nature brought about by his deposition of Wisdom with which I have been “liberally and ungrudgingly” endowed.

It was then I began to discover that there were some qualifications which I obviously lacked, for as each little test arose I found myself failing miserably and the disappointment at times was almost palpable. It was then that the apostle Paul confronted me in his letter to the Hebrews that there was a personality trait in need a little fine tuning. So that you don’t feel left out let me insert the Scripture here to clarify what the deficiency consisted of.

HEBREWS 10:36 For YOU HAVE NEED OF STEADFAST PATIENCE AND ENDURANCE, SO THAT (Without steadfast this patient endurance there is no “SO THAT” .. comments mine) you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God, and thus receive and carry away [and enjoy to the full] what is promised. (In this case, “Wisdom from Above”)

It is a well-known fact that patience is a characteristic of the male species!!!! And therefore I find it quite confronting that the Apostle should be so outspoken as to suggest that there could be some lack of this characteristic in me, but in reflection, I find that there is much promised in God’s Word that I obviously have not yet “received and carried away and enjoy to the full”. Because Paul continues to say “what is promised” requires me to explore further the implications of “**STEADFAST PATIENCE AND ENDURANCE.**”

I found it therefore not the least bit comfortable in my consultation with the Apostle James where he suggests the necessity for “**TRIAL AND PROVING OF YOUR FAITH.**” His recommendations in chapter 1-3 are not just suggestions, they are adamant.

JAMES 1:3-5 Be assured and understand that THE TRIAL AND PROVING OF YOUR FAITH BRING OUT ENDURANCE AND STEADFASTNESS AND PATIENCE. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, SO THAT you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing. If any of you is deficient in wisdom, let him ask of the giving God [Who gives] to everyone liberally and ungrudgingly, without reproaching or faultfinding, and it will be given him.

James is equally as audacious as his Apostolic colleague Paul, and hastens to suggest that this unpalatable roadmap will lead me to the acquisition of **“ENDURANCE, STEADFASTNESS, and PATIENCE.”**

It was then, and equally as confronting when Paul explained to the Romans, that there were consequences in the pursuit of patience.

ROMANS 5:3-4 Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation.

ROMANS 8:25 But if we hope for what is still unseen by us, WE WAIT FOR IT WITH PATIENCE AND COMPOSURE.

So firstly I needed a better understanding of patience, and the Greek used in the New Testament indicates that it is the characteristics of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings. “Patience” includes endurance, constancy, perseverance.

It seems that the church at Thessalonica was reasonably well acquainted with the process as the apostle Paul applauds them and also recommends the evidence they provide, “in the midst of persecutions and crushing distresses and afflictions”

2 THESSALONIANS 1:4 And this is a cause of our mentioning you with pride among the churches (assemblies) of God for your steadfastness (YOUR UNFLINCHING ENDURANCE AND PATIENCE) and your firm faith in the midst of all the persecutions and crushing distresses and afflictions under which you are holding up.

So then we need to balance that with the understanding of “Tribulation” and although the Greek is clear it is not comforting. Strong’s concordance says tribulation consists of “pressure, and oppression, affliction, trouble”.

As a consequence of my ambition to qualify as James suggests, **be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing** I had to step back and try to reconcile how I could qualify. As is the case with most of us I began to look for the easy way out. This consisted of my exploring some behaviour patterns which appeared natural to me, but obviously are contrary to the personality Father would like me to evidence. It was then I remembered what the Lord said to Ezekiel, and I have taken the liberty of inserting in red the words which make this verse pertinent to my condition.

EZEKIEL 11:19 And I will give them one heart (attitude)[a new heart (attitude)] and I will put a new spirit within them; and I will take the stony [unnaturally hardened] heart (attitude) out of their flesh, and will give them a heart (attitude) of flesh [SENSITIVE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE TOUCH OF THEIR GOD], (repeated in Ezekiel 36:26)

Patience is the ability to tolerate waiting, delay, or frustration without becoming agitated or upset. It's the ability to be able to control your emotions or impulses and proceed calmly when faced with difficulties. It comes from the Latin word “pati” which means to suffer, to endure, to bear. Needless to say, patience

does not come easily to most of us and it's probably harder now to be patient than historically it has ever been.

The instantaneous nature of so many aspects of modern society is empowering, and also a great convenience. It's so easy, in fact, that we take a lot of it for granted. Travel has never been faster. Communicating has never been easier. Watching "On Demand" entertainment and enjoying other forms of media is not only affordable, but requires as little as a click of the mouse or a television remote control. Unfortunately, the instantaneous aspect of so many facets of our lives has its drawbacks.

When we text message someone and don't receive a response back for several hours, we debate and ponder the "meaning" of the delay" — as if any postponement is an insult, a display of disinterest, or a subtle message that requires a deep interpretation. **WE ARE IMPATIENT!!!!**

Not only has Peter prescribed in 2 Peter 1 a route to being successfully "patient", (see scripture further down) he is supported by Paul's injunction to the Galatians, and it is worth noting that the fruit of the spirit incorporates several of the characteristics that form "THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE", and it is also interesting to note that the letter to the Galatians turns around the order from 2 Peter 1 by starting off with the virtue of "love" whereas Peter concludes with the virtue of love.

GALATIANS 5:22-24 But the fruit of the [Holy] Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is love, joy (gladness), peace, PATIENCE (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness, Gentleness (meekness, humility), SELF-CONTROL (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge]. And those who belong to Christ Jesus (the Messiah) have crucified the flesh (the godless human nature) with its passions and appetites and desires. (And dare I include "their impatience!")

The thought still hovered in the back of my mind that maybe I could be excused in some respects and took the unusual route of asking the experts. They explained to

me that I was either an A, B, C or D type personality and that was how I was hardwired for action. The only problem was I evidenced traits from all four categories and therefore risk becoming schizophrenic.

It is suggested that an impatient person is predisposed to perceive virtually all situations as threatening, not to their survival, but to their goals. And so “IMPATIENCE” again becomes a “self-centred” behaviour pattern, not a “God centred” trait.

The next expert went on to explain that there are four different temperaments:-

Sanguine, Choleric, Melancholic, and Phlegmatic. This only served to confuse me further, it did not provide the excuses I was looking for and so I have to concede that the advice of the Apostles was a much more promising route to traverse. It is far more secure to rely on the word of God and His directions, for not only are His directions accurate but also preserving, they will keep us from being idle and unfruitful as nominated in 2 Peter 1 : 8 but also successful, proven by Joshua’s experience.

JOSHUA 9:14 So the [Israelite] men partook of their food and DID NOT CONSULT THE LORD.

(Is this not a classical example of “impatience??)

You will recall this is after the Israelis had conducted some very successful incursions into enemy territory and eliminated hordes of the enemy under God’s direction.

So I return to the premise that Paul addressed to the Hebrews, paraphrase, “**You have need of patience**”. This precious commodity is not like Wisdom, you just can’t ask for it and get a bucket load, it follows a very precise path that we explored previously, as follows:-

2 PETER 1:5-7 For this very reason, (what is the reason”become sharers (partakers) of the divine nature”) adding your diligence [to the divine promises], EMPLOY EVERY EFFORT in exercising your faith to develop virtue (excellence, resolution, Christian energy), and in [exercising] virtue [develop] knowledge (intelligence), And in [exercising] knowledge [develop] self-control, and in [exercising] self-control [develop] steadfastness (patience, endurance), and in [exercising] steadfastness [develop] godliness (piety), And in [exercising] godliness [develop] brotherly affection, and in [exercising] brotherly affection [develop] Christian love.

A revision of this study will probably assist me in enhancing my “knowledge” which is a precursor of “self-control” which is the precursor of “PATIENCE”. The challenge which is found here centres on firstly my developing “self-control”, and as Peter does not nominate any particular circumstance in which I have to evidence self-control, I have to take him to mean that self-control is to be applied in every avenue of my life.

PROVERBS 5:1 MY SON, be attentive to my Wisdom [GODLY WISDOM LEARNED BY ACTUAL AND COSTLY EXPERIENCE], and incline your ear to my understanding [of what is becoming and prudent for you],

It would seem that there is no alternative for me if I want to attain to what Father offers in His Word, the dilemma is that you will be watching to see if I have “learned anything” and that I don’t get impatient with my progress but get serious about my complying.

JAMES 1:6 Only it must be in faith that he asks with no wavering (no hesitating, no doubting). For the one who wavers (hesitates, doubts) is like the billowing surge out at sea that is blown hither and thither and tossed by the wind.

If we think we are “patient” maybe we need to evaluate if it is ambivalence, indecision, vacillation, neglect, double mindedness or even hesitancy. We should not only recall but evidence what James has said **NO WAVERING, NO HESITATING, NO DOUBTING**, the outward display of our “personality traits” will obviously betray our compliance.

HEBREWS 10:36 For you have need of steadfast patience and endurance, so that you may perform and fully accomplish the will of God, and thus receive and carry away [and enjoy to the full] what is promised.

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