

SERMON OUTLINE

GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS AND MAN'S HESITANCY

JUDGES 4:1-24 | REV. JONAR GARCIA

Judges 4 highlights the tension between God's clear instructions and man's hesitation to obey. Though God had already given a promise of victory, Barak hesitated and placed a condition on his obedience. In contrast, Deborah displayed confident faith in God's word, and Jael acted with decisive courage when the opportunity came. Despite Barak's hesitancy, God remained faithful to His plan. He delivered Israel through a series of unexpected choices: prophetess as military strategist, a hesitant general needing reassurance, and a non-Israelite woman who dealt the final blow to the enemy commander.

In this sermon, we see Israel's repetitive sin, which led them to a cycle of cruelty, slavery and oppression from their enemies. This time, God sold them into the hands of Jabin, king of Canaan, who had 900 chariots of iron. (Judges 4:1-3)

Deborah, a prophetess and judge of Israel, led the people during a time

of oppression. She summoned Barak and told him that God commanded him to lead an army against Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army. Barak agreed to go only if Deborah went with him, and though she agreed, she prophesied that the honor of victory would go to a woman, not to him. (Judges 4:4-10)

Despite Barak's hesitancy, God still gave the army of Sisera into the hands of the Israelites. Deborah reminded Barak that the Lord was with him, so Barak went down with his army to fight Sisera and his 900 chariots of iron. God routed Sisera, and his army fell by the edge of the sword. God divinely intervened and gave victory to Barak. (Judges 4:11-16)

God remained faithful to His plan. He delivered Israel through a series of unexpected choices—a prophetess as military strategist, a hesitant general needing reassurance, and a non-Israelite woman who dealt the final blow to the enemy commander.

Finally, Israel experienced victory over Jabin, king of Canaan. (Judges 4:17-24)

This passage teaches us that God's instructions often require courageous obedience, even when the odds seem overwhelming. Hesitation doesn't cancel God's purpose, but it may forfeit personal honor. Yet, God graciously fulfills His plan through those who are willing to act in faith.

Sermon Focus:

This story reminds us that when God gives instructions, our response matters. Hesitancy delays obedience and may cost us honor, but it does not stop God's plan. Will you respond with faith like Deborah and Jael, or hesitate like Barak? The victory belongs to the LORD, but He invites us to be part of it through trust, obedience and courage. ✨

THE PURSUIT OF TRUE WISDOM

REV. DON GUICO

Have you ever found yourself chasing something you thought would fulfill you, only to realize it left you empty? Whether it's success, knowledge, pleasure, or even a relationship, so many of life's pursuits seem meaningful at first—but they often fall short of the deep satisfaction our souls crave. King Solomon, the wisest man to walk the earth apart from Jesus, knew this feeling well. He devoted himself to understanding everything "under the sun," exploring knowledge, pleasure, wealth and accomplishment. But in the end, he called it all "vanity" and "a chasing after the wind" (Eccl. 1:14). He had more wisdom than anyone before him—yet found no peace when it was separated from God. His journey teaches us a powerful truth: wisdom, like all things, only finds its purpose when it begins with God and having a right relationship with Him.

Let us draw insights about wisdom and contentment from Ecclesiastes 1:12-18.

I. The Desire to Understand Life (Ecclesiastes 1:13)

God has placed eternity in our hearts (Eccl. 3:11). It's natural to seek purpose, truth and understanding. Solomon was earnest in this pursuit. However, when we search for meaning apart from our Creator, we end up with more confusion than clarity. Human curiosity can lead us to knowledge, but only God gives us the wisdom to use it rightly.

II. The Limits of Human Wisdom (Ecclesiastes 1:14-15)

Solomon's observations are sobering: wisdom that comes from this world may reveal the brokenness around us, but it cannot repair it. Like a doctor who diagnoses a terminal illness but has no cure, or a mechanic who knows the issue but lacks the tools to fix it—knowledge without God is powerless to redeem what's broken. Earthly wisdom may expose problems, but it lacks the power to restore. Let us not place our hope in intellect, degrees, or worldly success. Let our understanding be shaped by God's truth, not just by human reasoning.

III. The Burden of Knowledge Without God (Ecclesiastes 1:16-17)

As Solomon grew in knowledge, so did his sorrow. Why? Because knowledge without God leads to weariness, not rest. It inflates pride but cannot nourish the soul. As Paul reminds us, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1). True wisdom humbles us and draws us closer to God, not away from Him. We must let our learning and experience be used to glorify God, not to elevate ourselves. The more we know, the more we should depend on Him.

IV. The Source of True Wisdom (Proverbs 9:10; 1 Corinthians 1:30)

All true wisdom begins with a reverent relationship with God. Wisdom isn't just knowing facts—it's knowing the One who made us. In the New Testament, Christ is revealed as the ultimate expression of God's wisdom. In Him, we find not just knowledge, but righteousness, redemption, and peace (1 Cor. 1:30). When we pursue Christ, we pursue the very heart of wisdom itself. We must spend time

daily in God's Word, in prayer and in worship. Let our lives be shaped by Christ, not by culture.

Solomon's conclusion wasn't that wisdom is bad—it's that wisdom apart from God is meaningless. He had it all: riches, status, intelligence. Yet, in the end, he found it all empty without God. This is a wake-up call for us. Don't waste your life chasing shadows. Chase Christ—the true light of the world.

To avoid pitfalls, here are some practical applications for us:

- 1. Seek wisdom from above.** James 3:17 describes godly wisdom as "pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit." Pursue this through Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- 2. Guard your heart.** Let Christ, not culture, define your priorities. Don't let temporary success replace eternal values.
- 3. Live for eternal purpose.** Let your understanding serve others and reflect Christ. Wisdom is not just for knowledge—it's for transformation and service.
- 4. Find peace in God alone.** Solomon's regrets remind us that true contentment is not in achievement but in having a right relationship with God.

Ask yourself today: "Am I pursuing wisdom to draw closer to God, or simply to impress others?" Let the answer drive you back to Jesus—the One who is our wisdom, our life, and our hope. ✨

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