

Kingdom Living Today

Illustrating the WAY of God's Kingdom for a Modern World

32. To Our Lord Belong Wisdom And Counsel

“YOU ALWAYS HAVE MY SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION WITHIN YOU. IT GIVES ME GREAT JOY WHEN YOU LOOK TO ME FIRST SO THAT YOU MAY GIVE AN APT REPLY”

Brett had just gotten home from work. As he entered the bedroom, Lacie put the phone on mute and turned to him in distress. “I’m talking with my friend, Linsey, and her husband, Garth, is packing right now to leave her. He told her he’s had enough. What do I tell her?”

Brett quickly bowed his head, calling upon the Spirit of Christ within. “Lord Jesus, what should I do?” That quiet inner voice Brett knew so well responded (Isaiah 11:2), *Ask Garth if he and his wife would like to go out to dinner with you.* □

Opening his eyes, he told Lacie, “Have Linsey ask him if he’d like to go out for dinner with us.”

Stupefied, Lacie kept the phone on mute. “He’s *leaving her* and you’re asking him out to dinner???”

“That’s what I believe Jesus gave me,” her husband replied calmly. Then more firmly he urged, “ASK him...”

To Lacie’s (and Linsey’s!) astonishment, Garth replied, “Yes.” With wide eyes she added, “They agreed to meet us at Lowery’s at seven.”

Brett and Lacie immediately called others in the fellowship family to be interceding for them. (2Corinthians 1:11) Brett barely knew Garth. Both women had maintained a friendship from the time they’d marched together at a Pro-Life rally. The men had infrequently encountered each other at various social gatherings, and about all Brett knew was that Garth was a pilot for Fedex—and that they lived in one of the biggest houses in town.

Just after seven, the two couples settled in at their table with polite chitchat. But no sooner had their meals been ordered when Garth began his harangue about what he saw as irreconcilable issues in his marriage. “We moved into our house because she wanted something magnificent with six bathrooms. Even when I’m home, I hardly see her because she’s either outside working on the yard or busy with something else she feels she needs to do to keep the place looking impressive.” (1John 2:16) He shook his head angrily. “The two of us don’t have anything in common but living in this monstrosity.”

Just as Linsey was about to counterattack, Brett cut in, “May I ask what is it you *want*, Garth?”

Bristling with vexation, he retorted, “I’ve been trying for over a year to get her to move to a smaller home in a smaller town where we’d have more time for each other. But she refuses to leave her ‘dream home.’”

Somewhat shamefaced, Linsey shot back, “I grew up in poverty! I swore I’d never live like that when I got married. You gave me what I wanted, so why are you complaining now?”

Lacie was befuddled by her friend's materialistic response. "Linsey, I thought I knew you. But now I'm not so sure..."

"I never wanted you to know my true reason for living in such an extravagant house," Linsey blurted. "I knew you would've said something I didn't want to hear. There was no other way but to deceive you."

"Now you see what I'm up against!" Garth jumped in loudly. "I don't think she even cares about me, but only about what I can give her. I almost feel like she's used me all of our marriage. At this point I don't think she can love anybody but herself."

Linsey's eyes flooded as she bolted from the table and ran toward the rest room. Brett gestured for Lacie to go with her. Then, asking the Spirit for wisdom^(James 1:5,6), he turned to Garth. "Is there anyone who can tell you what to do?"

Taken aback, the man growled, "No!"

"So, do you really want to lose your marriage?" Brett inquired.

"NO! Despite everything, I still love my wife. I'd do anything to save our marriage, but I just can't live like this any longer."

Again Brett bowed and asked the Lord for wisdom. Then he looked Garth in the eyes. "I want to give you an initial step if you earnestly want to turn this impasse around. Are you willing to accept what I'm going to ask of you?"^(Proverbs 27:9)

Garth was startled. He'd never had anyone challenge him this way. But there was a burning in his heart to do whatever it took to end the months of emotional pain so he answered somewhat meekly, "Yes. What do you want me to do?"

Brett handed him a piece of paper with the *Voice of the Martyrs* address on it. "EVERY time you bring up something negative about your wife, I want you to mail a check for \$500 to this ministry. Will you agree to do that?"

Brett was bowled over by how fast Garth answered. "YES... yes, I will. I give you my word." The two reached over shook hands.

The ladies still hadn't returned from the rest room. Brett then remembered an important area to probe which Jack had taught him. "Garth, how was your relationship with your father?"

"Not that good," the man answered quietly. "He always seemed to be working. And when he was home, he didn't interact much with us kids. Now, we talk maybe once or twice a year."

Brett decided to dig a little deeper. "If someone were to ask him what it was like to raise you, what do you think he'd say?"

A gruff snort accompanied the answer. "He'd tell you I was lazy and didn't do anything around the house. And that I always seemed to have a chip on my shoulder."

"How do you feel about what you just told me?" Brett asked somberly.

"I'd agree with that appraisal," the older man replied. "In fact, I don't think I really changed until I became a Marine helicopter pilot. Their training and standards for conduct changed me a lot."

Then Brett asked a question that pierced Garth. "Have you ever asked your father forgiveness for the years you hurt his heart? Would *you* want how you treated him to be done to you?"

Tears began to fill the big man's eyes. "No... No, I've never asked him. And, no, I wouldn't want to be treated with such disregard."^(Psalms 119:59)

“The Bible says that in everything, do to others what you’d have them do to you,”(Matthew 7:12) Brett cited. “Has it ever occurred to you that Linsey's disregard for your feelings is God’s way of letting you experience what you’ve done to your Dad?”

By this time Garth was all choked up. He felt like he’d been standing on a trap door that had just opened and he was freefalling. But curiously, there was also a sense of assurance deep inside that gave him a glimmer of hope.

Meanwhile, Lacie was holding a sobbing Linsey’s hand as the ladies sat on the sofa in the rest room anteroom. “Linsey, I can appreciate you keeping your motives from me about the house. But you’re destroying your marriage! Is this what you want: a huge house without a husband?”

“No! Of course not,” came the agitated response. “I thought I could keep both Garth *and* the house.”

“From what I can see, that’s not going to happen. You need to make a decision tonight—right now! Will it be your husband or the house?” Lacie issued as bold a challenge as she’d ever given anyone.(Proverbs 25:12) “You’re not going to get a second opportunity. Your husband needs to know whether he’s first or second on your priority list.”

Nancy wailed, “I don’t want to have to make that decision!”

Lacie prayed quickly for the indwelling Spirit to give her wisdom. The response she received was, *She has lived with the curse of Eve. Her husband has always given in to it.* (See: *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church: Lesson 35*; or our video, *Jesus In Your Home, The Home: Segment 8*)

“Linsey,” she said softly but firmly, “all of us women are born with the curse of Eve. It’s the desire to be independent and to control our husbands.(Genesis 3:6,16) In order to be the suitable helper God wants us to be as wives(Genesis 2:18), we need to rid ourselves of our desire to dominate.” She made sure Linsey was looking at her as she asked, “Are you willing to do that and become the wife God wants you to be for Garth?”

Linsey’s face crumpled as she resolved to follow her Lord’s ways rather than live a moment longer under the bondage of idolatry and independence.(Romans 6:16) “I do want that, Lacie. I’m so tired of the tension I’ve caused in our home. And I hate myself for all the hurt I’ve caused my husband. I know he loves me...”

Without any concern for where they were or who might walk in, Lacie grabbed Linsey by the hand and they both knelt by the sofa. Her trusting plea filled the small room as she prayed. “Father, you know Linsey’s heart and the desire to change which she’s voiced before you.(Romans 8:27,28) You also know the pain that’s rocked this marriage for so long. We call on you for the help she’ll need to do this. And for her sake, Father, we ask You to give her a sign of hope before she leaves this restaurant. We give you thanks in Jesus’s name. Amen.”

After the women embraced and Linsey pulled herself together, they returned to the table. Approaching with trepidation, Linsey expected her husband to give her the cold shoulder. But to her amazement he got up and hugged her! As he pulled the chair back for her to be seated, she was nearly in shock.

Garth sat down and reached for his wife’s hand. “We’ve got a long way to go, honey, but I want you to know that Brett has helped me make some changes.”

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“Changes?” she let out, not knowing what she’d hear next.

“There are a couple things I need to do. One is with my father, which I’ll explain later.” His wife was amazed by the calm assurance in his voice, a determined tone that indicated he wasn’t going to stop until everything that needed to be done was accomplished.^(Ruth 3:18)

Speaking as if he were making a pledge Garth went on, “I’ve agreed that each and every time I bring up a negative comment about you, I’ll make out a check for \$500 to the *Voice of the Martyrs* ministry. Each and every time...”

Linsey’s face radiated with stunned joy as she blurted out, “In the rest room Lacie prayed that God would give me a sign of hope before we left the restaurant tonight. Boy! Has He done that!”

“Did I miss something?” Brett asked.

Linsey’s glance at Garth said it all. He knew precisely what his wife was thinking, and they both burst into laughter. “My husband is the biggest penny pincher in the world!” They both laughed even harder. “For him to give that promise means that he really means business and NOTHING will hold him back. I have hope. I have REAL HOPE!”

Brett and Lacie voiced praise to God as Garth and Linsey stood to embrace with joyful tears streaming. After the hugs and sniffles subsided, Linsey confessed, “I have something to share too, dear. I want to sell the house!”

Garth couldn’t believe what he’d heard. “You want to do what???”

“I want to sell that place that I’ve made an idol. And, I want to become the wife you need and who God wants me to be!”^(1Peter 3:5) she proclaimed with a dazzling grin.

The rejoicing continued out into the parking lot where Brett and Lacie gave Garth and Linsey a copy of *Demolishing Your Strongholds* and *The Gospel of the Covenant*, and offered to meet with them again. Two households that night were filled with joyful awe in the Lord Who had heard their cries and knew their hearts were gladly willing to follow His will. When the home fellowship family gathered a few days later, Brett and Lacie related the events of the restaurant meeting. Shouts and songs of enthusiastic praise overflowed at the wonder of what the Spirit of Jesus had done in response to the prayers of many!

Brett and Lacie did get together again several times with Garth and Linsey, encouraging them as they discussed the materials they’d shared. And what joyous anticipation filled that couple as they sold their home in record time and headed off with a revitalized marriage and a keen hope for their future together!^(Jeremiah 29:11)