

Are You Reasoning Yourself Out of Prophetic Wisdom?

✖ God has given us the ability to reason—but too much mental reasoning blocks spiritual discernment and breeds plenty of confusion.

With that in mind, is it possible that you are reasoning yourself out of prophetic wisdom that could be blocking your spiritual growth, your blessings, and even the full manifestation of your destiny?

I'll admit it. I am analytical. I tend to reason through every possibility before making a decision. But I also pray after my thoughtful analysis and ultimately submit my plans to the written Word and the Spirit's leading (which always agree). Of course, I'm not perfect. But my purpose is to lean not on my own understanding—even when my own understanding seems plentiful in my own eyes (Prov. 3:5-6).

Because the human heart is deceitful above all things there is an ever-present danger of flowing in pride instead of flowing in the Spirit (Jer. 17:9). This is especially true when we consider ourselves well-versed, experts even, in any area. Knowledge puffeth up (1 Cor. 8:1), after all, and pride comes before the fall (Prov. 16:18).

If we rely solely on our own reasoning—our own understanding—we could find ourselves shipwrecked. But if we rely on the Spirit's wisdom—on His reasoning—we may find ourselves with a haul of blessings so big we can't contain them. Indeed, we can see this very principle in Scripture.

Just before Paul began his voyage to Rome, he received some prophetic wisdom from God. Paul told a centurion that he perceived a voyage that ended in disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also lives (Acts 27:10).

That's a pretty dire warning. But did the centurion listen to Paul? No, he was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship, who reasoned that the harbor was not suitable to winter in.

The centurion's response was, well, reasonable. The helmsman and the owner of the ship were expert sailors with keen understanding about the ways of the sea. Paul, by contrast, was a Pharisee-turned-tentmaker-turned-gospel-preacher who had no formal sailing experience. Paul simply didn't have the same seafaring credibility as the sailors. So when a majority decided that setting sail was the best move, expert reasoning won out over prophetic wisdom.

How many times have we done the same thing in our own lives? Our past experience and our smart friends give us reasons to go down a certain path even though we feel in our spirit that we should go the road less traveled. So we head off in a direction our expert friends suggested—and circumstances seem favorable at first. We think we have confirmation and we feel pretty good about our decision. That's what happened to Paul's shipmates. After they decided to ignore Paul's prophetic wisdom and set sail, a south wind blew softly. They supposed natural circumstances were proving their reasoning right (Acts 27:13).

Then it happened. Not long after they set sail, a tempestuous head wind arose. The ship was caught up in it. Just a few moments after expert pride caused the helmsman to set sail, all hope was lost that the ship would be saved (Acts 17:20).

Many of us have experienced similar circumstances. We rush out fully believing we are in God's will only to run into a major storm that brings discouragement and despair. We are confused because we sought wisdom in the counsel of many—but we weren't moving in God's timing so we landed in a tempest when God had planned a harvest. That's not to say that just because you encounter trials along your journey you missed it. But many

times when you move against God's prophetic wisdom, even unknowingly, you face obstacles that you wouldn't have otherwise seen.

Peter also had the opportunity to choose prophetic wisdom or lean on his own understanding. Peter let Jesus use his boat while He was teaching the multitudes. After Jesus was done with His sermon, He told Peter to "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch" (Luke 5:4). Now, Peter was an expert fisherman. He knew when and where—and how—to fish. Jesus was a carpenter by trade. Peter quickly answered with the voice of reason: "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing ..."

Had Peter stopped there, he would have missed his blessing. But he continued, "Nevertheless, at Your word I will let down the net" (Luke 5:5). Peter went against his own understanding and leaned into the prophetic wisdom Jesus offered. Jesus knew full well that Peter would catch so many fish that his boat couldn't even hold them all. The haul was so great that the nets were about to break and the boats about to sink. Ah, the blessings of obedience. Peter could have reasoned himself out of that blessing. How many blessings have we talked ourselves out of?

Of course, God in His mercy works everything out according to the counsel of His will—and His will is good (Eph. 1:11). That means even when we stray off the Spirit's path and onto the road of reasoning, He will work all things together for our good (Rom. 8:28).

When Peter walked away from his fishing business to follow Jesus—which goes against all logical reasoning—he received some greatest spiritual blessings. Peter had the revelation from the Father that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God; Peter preached the first Holy Ghost message that got thousands saved; Peter was a father of the early church. Indeed, Peter's blessings for embracing prophetic wisdom go

well beyond the boatload of fish.

But God also worked Paul's unfortunate situation together for good. Although the boat on which Paul was traveling to Rome wound up shipwrecked on Malta, God used the occasion to advance the gospel. Publius, a leading citizen of the island, got healed of fever and dysentery. Then the rest of the people on the island who had diseases came to Paul to be healed by Jesus (Acts 28:7-9).

Although Luke doesn't record salvations, I am convinced that many of those who received healing also received salvation—and, knowing what we know about Paul, probably got filled with the Holy Ghost too! And that's ultimately what it's all about: getting people saved, filled with the Spirit, and equipped to be a witness for Jesus.

So as you face your next crossroads, consider the eternal perspective. Lean not on your own understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. Even if you run into a tempest, you can be sure that He knew about it beforehand and is using it to bring you toward your destiny in Christ.

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