

How You Can Face Foolish and Evil People With Spirit's Wisdom

We have all had the painful experience of someone wrongly judging us or not understanding us, and as a result, our relationship with them suffers or is severed. Additionally, we all have had the painful experience of thinking we knew someone and trusting them, only to find—much to our misery—that they were not the person we thought they were.

Jesus came to earth in large part for the sake of relationship, but even devout religious leaders were foolish or evil in dealing with Him. In John 7, they sought to kill Jesus rather than have a relationship with Him because they wrongly judged Him. Jesus then rebuked their poor relational wisdom, saying, “Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly” (v. 24, NLT).

In relationships, we rely on predictable patterns of behavior when deciding who we trust and who we don't. This method causes problems because we judge by what we can see outwardly, and to truly know someone and judge correctly, Jesus said we must “look beneath the surface” of the person to their inner world that only the Spirit sees.

Following this statement, John 7 records that a great debate arose over whether Jesus was a good man or a bad man. Some said He was demon-possessed, others said He was Spirit-filled. Then we read, “Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not been glorified”

(vv. 37-39, NIV).

Jesus' point is simple: Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible for any of us to know anyone else's true nature on the inside. But with the Spirit, we can look beneath the surface of what we see in the visible world (the clothes they wear, words they say or actions they choose) and see a person's and see a person's true self in the invisible world (the state of their soul, condition of their heart and motive of their mind).

Jesus had wisdom for His relationships because the Holy Spirit helped Him look beneath the surface in order to judge people correctly. Isaiah 11:2 (MEV) promised this trait of Jesus, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord."

To properly deal with people and have any healthy relationships you must have the discerning wisdom of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit and wisdom are closely connected in the Bible because the Holy Spirit is the source of wisdom. Job 32:8 (ESV) links the Spirit to discerning wisdom, saying, "But it is the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty that makes him understand." In Ephesians 1:17 (MEV), Paul prays that believers receive "the Spirit of wisdom."

The Spirit of God knows people better than anyone, and He will help you have healthy relationships. God wants you to be wise and seek wisdom so you can know how to handle foolish and evil people.

✘ *Adapted from Spirit-Filled Jesus by Mark Driscoll, copyright 2018, published by Charisma House. When Jesus walked on the earth as a man, He relied on the Holy Spirit to give Him discerning wisdom, knowledge and power. This book is a must-have to give you understanding on how Jesus lived His life in the Spirit and help you do the same. To order your*

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Prayer Power for the Week of May 12, 2019

This week, surrender yourself anew to the Holy Spirit and allow His power, wisdom and knowledge to fill you and exhibit His fruit as you journey through your Spirit-filled life. Continue to pray for our nation and its leaders. Pray that the spirit of love and unity would overcome the spirit of hate and division in our land. Pray that deception would lift off the eyes of the people so they can embrace what is good and profitable for all. Remember Israel and our allies. Read Job 32:8, Proverbs 9:8-9, John 7:37-39, Ephesians 1:17.

For more of Mark Driscoll's teaching, listen to the podcasts included with this article.