

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR *Real Life*

44. What I Know Now, but Did Not Know Then

You are listening to episode 44 of the Encouragement for Real Life Podcast, titled, "What I Know Now, But Did Not Know Then." I'm so glad you're here! Welcome back, friend! No matter our age today, when we think back to our younger years, we might remember the inexperienced and immature version of ourselves, right? I scratch my head at some of my childish ways and actions in my younger years, and I wonder, *what was I thinking?* Maybe you, too? It's a good thing we've grown up, isn't it? It's a good thing what we know now has matured from what we knew then. This is the subject of this week's episode, how God and His wisdom play a role in this, and I share some of my own takeaways of what I know now that I didn't know then. It might surprise you, or it might not. But either way, we'll find some encouragement as we go together. So, let's get into episode 44.

It's been said that with age comes wisdom. And frankly, I agree. I think back to many of my younger, less mature days, and what a difference wisdom would have made. With wisdom, maybe I would have made less mistakes. Maybe I would have floundered less. And maybe I would have lived more abundantly according to God's standards back then. I don't know. But one thing's for sure, I wish I would have had the wisdom in my 20s and 30s that I have now. If you're older than your 20s or 30s, do you feel the same? I'm not saying I regret my 20s and 30s, because I don't. They played a part in making me who I am today. Our younger years impact who we are in our later years.

And if you're in your 20s and 30s now, well, I encourage you to live in God's wisdom every single day. Now. You don't need to wait until a day in the future. Live in God's wisdom today. And in a few minutes, we'll dig deeper in how to do that. I pray my words make a difference for you today.

The thing is, God knew what He was doing when He created us and designed us to gain wisdom as we age. Yet, we see in the Bible of how He gave wisdom to those who asked, such as Solomon. But first, before we look at Solomon's example, what is wisdom, anyway? Dictionary.com defines it as the quality or state of being wise; knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; discernment, or insight. Thesaurus.com adds the synonyms of foresight, understanding, experience, and intelligence.

I like to think of it this way, as we age, we gain experience. And as we gain experience, we gain more understanding, and sometimes that's accompanied by wisdom.

One thing I know now is we can ask God for wisdom.

I wish the less mature, younger Julie would have known or thought to ask God for wisdom. Yes, that's a thing! We can ask God for wisdom! No matter what age we are! But do we do this? Do you and I ask God for wisdom? Do we pray for wisdom? Back in my younger years, I didn't know that was an option. I don't know why, but wisdom was not something I prayed for. Back then I prayed for the self-comfort

type of things and the help-me-do-this kind of prayers. I was more concerned about me and my wants than I was about gaining wisdom or reading my Bible.

James 1:5 in the Voice translation says, "If you don't have all the wisdom needed for this journey, then all you have to do is ask God for it; and God will grant all that you need. He gives lavishly and never scolds you for asking." Scripture couldn't be any more clear, could it? We are invited to ask God for wisdom.

So, let's take a look at King Solomon, and his example from 1 Kings, chapter 3. This is what it says in verse 5 in the NLT, "That night the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"

Can you imagine the God of the universe, our Creator of all things, the One who formed you in your mother's womb appearing to you and asking you what you want? What would you say? How would you respond? Thirty-year-old Julie would have likely responded with, "Success. I'll take success please." Or, "How about an easy life, God? That sounds pretty good."

Today, I want to respond more like Solomon.

In verse 9 Solomon responds to God and answers His question. "Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

Continuing on in verses 10-14, "The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom. So, God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have! And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life! And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."

God gives us His good gifts, doesn't He?

Guess how old Solomon was when he asked the Lord for wisdom? Most scholars suggest he was in his early 20s. His 20s! He knew enough in his young age and in his new role as king to ask for the unmatched gift of wisdom. Because he knew he was in over his head leading God's people. He knew he couldn't lead God's people with excellence without wisdom. Yes, he needed God's wisdom, and he needed it now. But don't we all? We may not be a king or leading a great nation. We may not be leading anyone at all, except ourselves. And we may be younger or older than King Solomon was when we made his request. None of that matters. You and I need God's wisdom, every single day. We can't live well without it.

And because Solomon asked for it to lead God's people well, God gave Him much more than what He asked. God also granted him riches and fame and a long life.

Wisdom is a gift from God that continues to give.

Not only for ourselves but for those around us. Our wisdom affects those we do life with. Our wisdom comes through everything we do. No wonder God was pleased with Solomon when he asked for it.

All wisdom comes from the Lord, and so do common sense and understanding. Proverbs 2:6 CEV

As I was pondering wisdom this week and asking God to grant me His wisdom, a rush of thoughts filled me. These thoughts are the reason for this episode. These thoughts were full of the many things I know now but didn't know when I was younger. All thanks to wisdom and experience. So, I began a list. My intention wasn't to do anything with this list, but just to use it as a visual reminder of the results of God's wisdom in my life. But I realized maybe I should share this list, instead. Or at least part of it. Maybe sharing it might inspire another? Maybe sharing it might help someone else recognize in her life the importance and validity of God's wisdom in our everyday lives. So, here goes.

What I know now that I didn't know then.

My life is not about me. My life is about God.
I don't need to try to be perfect. My Savior already is.
Instead of being tempted to rush through life, learn to embrace each day.
Live in the moment, not for the future, and not in the past.
The grass isn't greener anywhere else.
Look for the sunrise and sunset. God is there.
Life with God is better than life without Him.
Jesus loves me, this I know...
Everyone is going through something.
Life is not a competition.
Stopping to smell the roses helps me be a better person.
I can walk my errands instead of running them.
Joy is found in the simple things.
Love isn't a feeling.
The little things in life are sometimes the big things.
God's plans for my life are different than mine, but His won't disappoint.
My mistakes don't define me. God does.
Extending forgiveness lightens my soul.
Encouraging others encourages me.

Oh, I know I have a bunch more, but we'd be here till next Thursday if I kept going.

So, what about you, friend? What do you know now that you didn't know then? What has wisdom taught you? How is the you of today different than the you of yesterday? Pausing and considering what we know now that we didn't know then encourages our hearts and spurs us on. We are able to tangibly see how we've grown. We witness how God and His wisdom has worked in us and through us. And that's always a good thing!

Isn't it a joy to be reminded at how God is good at growing us, molding us, transforming us--no matter our age--into the people He desires us to be? He never leaves us as we are, and our real-life examples prove that to us. God is faithful to continue working in us in the same ways He has done so in the past.

Thank God for His wisdom and transforming work in our lives!

Charles Stanley once said, "Wisdom is the capacity to see things from God's viewpoint." What if we prayed that this week? What if you and I asked God to help us see things from His viewpoint through the

lens of His wisdom? Do you suppose that would make a difference in our lives? I think it would and I think it will.

Will you pray with me now?

Father God, You are our good, good Father, and You know what we need before we even ask. You see all things and You care for Your own. Thank You for Your consistent love and presence in our lives. Father, as James 1:5 states, we can ask You for Your wisdom and You will lavishly bless us with it, without ever scolding us for asking. So, Lord, please bless us with Your wisdom. Because Your thoughts are higher than ours and Your ways are higher than our ways, align our thoughts and ways with Yours. Help us to see things from Your viewpoint. Open our eyes to see You. Thank You for molding us and shaping us into the people You desire us to be, and for never leaving us as we were or are. We are so very grateful, Father God. And we love You so very much. In Jesus' name. Amen.

As always, we're continuing the discussion on wisdom and what we know now that we didn't know then in our Encouragement for Real Life Community on Facebook. Come on over and join in the fun. You'll find the link in the show notes.

I invite you over to my Free Resources page where you'll find some extra freebies to encourage your heart... printables, lock screens, social posts, and fun bookmarks, and even scavenger hunts you can do yourself or give as gifts! Access this page from the snow notes as well.

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In closing, Solomon began his kingship well by asking God for wisdom. But sadly, over the years his many wives led him astray, and he drifted from God. What if he would have kept seeking God and asking Him daily for a renewal of God's wisdom? Think it would have made a difference? I do. May this be a warning for us today. What we know now that we didn't know then might be the most important point. To keep seeking God and asking for His wisdom. Daily. Thank you for being here today, friend. God bless you.

Julie Lefebvre