

## The Measure of a Man, “A Man of Wisdom” By Gene Getz

The concept and description of wisdom may vary, but for the purpose of this devotion, the following in a word: **Prudent**.

Where a single word is not enough, elaboration comes to play; so, let's look at wisdom for the young believer – through the examples and details offered in this devotion.

On the matter of speaking and listening, which of the two do you think is more important? Yes, listening is far more important; thus art of listening (and learning) far exceeds the verbose – and sometime vociferous – words that can pour out of our mouths.

Remember that “the tongue” can be your worst enemy – both your tongue and the tongue of someone. Careless words are just that – careless! Worst yet, *sharp* words – or words that bite – will cause much hurt and suffering. **Let your conversation be seasoned with salt.**

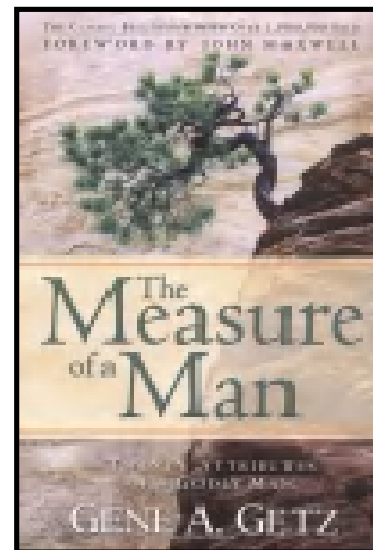
A second aspect of wisdom is judgment. Paul writes of sound judgment in Romans, chapter 12:

*Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, **God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.***

Notice the distinction between “your culture” and the God's work (in you). Be advised that the culture will *always be dragging you down*.

Returning the word, “prudent”, consider some personal attributes...as part of God's work:

- **Humble** – yes humility is part of prudence; like Jesus, all believers are called to humble themselves. Again Paul instructs in Philippians, chapter 2:  
**Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead.** Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand.
- **Grace** – a wise man has a proper view of the grace of God; understanding that salvation and righteousness are the gift and offering of God through Christ. Grace is the answer to our depravity and sin...



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- **Gratitude** – having a heart of gratitude – with the realization from which all things comes – is likewise the trait of the wise. Anything less would be denying God’s love for you...
- **Prayerful** – prayer is an extension of faith, an expression of your trust that, as you prayer, the Father hears your prayers...knowing your heart. Wisdom comes from prayer...
- **Meekness** – being meek is not being a *wimp*; but it is a certain confidence – not in ourselves but in Christ...a reliance that is faith in action...and does not fear or fret over the things that cannot destroy the soul

### Is there a way to be wise in three easy steps?

No; being wise is not something quantified into steps are a procedure; being wise is what we aspire (or should) to be – a pursuit...

### Can we reach the point of being wise...of being perfect?

No, not in this lifetime; but the good news is that God enables the process to begin...and continue...toward the *high call in heaven*.

### Are there any crossroads or diversions along this process?

Yes, there is always the possibility of a diversion (of being sidetracked or deceived). Gene reminds the believer of this possibility when he warns:

**As Christians, it is easy to go to extremes.** Either we see ourselves as nothing or we are caught up in an exalted view of ourselves. **The more immature we are, the more we vacillate between these two attitudes.**

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### More specifically, what cause this variation of attitudes?

Gene lists some possibilities for the variation or imbalance; here are some:

1. An unfortunate series of circumstances beyond human control..
  - Loss of parents or parent
  - Bad experiences in school or family
  - Negative influences from others
  - Hereditary factors such as illnesses, addictions, etc.
2. Incorrect Theology
  - You have treated as (or taught) that you have no value or worth...that you don't matter or are not significant
  - You don't understand forgiveness and grace
3. Parents who are unwise
  - Withhold praise or are deeply and pointedly cruel – even threatening
  - Give you too much responsibility or independence – as though you were an adult
  - Over-indulge you were material things – as though these things can substitute or replace what you've lost; or perhaps, to win or retain your favor or loyalty to them.

### Identifying and dealing with these possibilities takes time and courage.

Sometimes, the possibility of “possibilities” involves a lot of pain – in dealing with the truth however unfavorable it might be.

Help is a very likely need in the process of examining and applying such possibilities. Don't think that such pain – with its deep wounds – can be easily resolved; at the same time, don't try to *bury your feelings* thinking that the hurt or pain will simply go away.

I strongly encourage you to get good counsel; help from those who know much and can encourage you through prayer, counsel and care.

The book of Ecclesiastes tells us that: *with much wisdom comes much sorrow*. King Solomon knew about wisdom (purported as the wisest man) and, in his wisdom, knowledge of self and mankind did bring sorrow. **Sorrow is not a bad thing – though it may seem like it at times.**

Remember that Christ was a *man of sorrow, familiar with suffering*; yet, in this sorrow sprang a humble, gracious, grateful, prayerful and committed child of God – who kept his focus on the *things above*...rather than culture alone.