

What Do You Think?

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Instructions: The format of these mini-studies is similar to that of the Bible On-Line Study Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions further explain the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

What do you do when you're just not sure what to do?

Let's say you face a tough choice between two options, and you can see good points about both or maybe neither one looks very good. So what do you do? Like most of us, you probably find someone and ask, "What do you think I should do?" or "What would you do if you were in my situation?"

Instinctively we seem to agree with the old saying, "Two heads are better than one."

But *why* is advice important? When should we seek it? Whose advice should we listen to? And whose should we not listen to?

Following good advice can make our lives smoother and happier, sparing us from many of the pitfalls we might otherwise experience. In this study you'll learn the real value of seeking and following good advice.

Before you begin this study, be sure to get a Bible, pen and pencil and some paper. Reading and then writing the Bible verses that answer the questions asked in this study will help you remember the important principles you'll be learning.

1. King Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived. This was because God gave him wisdom. What is Solomon's advice to a young person concerned about his or her future?
Proverbs 19:20.

Life is full of decisions. From the simple, day-to-day decisions of what to eat and wear, to the more complex concerns such as deciding on a career, whether to go to college, where to live or whom to marry.

Some of the decisions we make while we're young will affect us for the rest of our lives. Realizing that we all need advice in making many of our decisions, Solomon advises us to *listen* to the counsel and instruction of others!

2. Is it wise to seek out several sources of advice – is there safety in a number of counselors?
Proverbs 11:14; 15:22.

No matter who we are or how much we may know, we need advice. Recognizing this, successful businessmen and corporate executives seek advice before they make major decisions. They realize that good decisions require the input of others.

It is true we can learn from our own mistakes. But just think how much further ahead in life we'll be if we learn from the mistakes of others. If we could skip the mistakes that have been made over and over again by other people, our lives would be much happier and more successful.

3. Some people, however, are too proud to take advice from others. They ignore or ridicule what others have to say, almost as if they believe that they alone have all the right answers. But what do the proverbs say about a person who is wise in his own eyes? Proverbs 26:12; 16:18; 12:15; 28:26.

Some people seem to think they have nothing to learn. They think they know it all. They have the classic "Don't tell me what to do!" attitude. Feeling self-sufficient, they do not listen to anyone.

If we're honest, we'll admit that we usually don't know all the facts. Others may come up with ideas and solutions we might not think of ourselves. By listening to them with an open mind, we can profit from their mistakes and experiences.

No one can guarantee that you will get perfect advice. But you can be more confident about your decisions by choosing wise counselors – people who are balanced, who have a good reputation and who know you.

4. What is one excellent source of wisdom and instruction? Proverbs 13:1; 1:8.

Our parents, more than any other people, are concerned for our welfare and future happiness. They have had many good and bad experiences while going through life. We can learn from those experiences. But only if we find out what they are.

Even when we may not think our parents are right, we are usually better off listening to them anyway. After all, they have seen and experienced a lot more in life than we have.

If you are thinking about a career, in addition to talking with your parents it is wise to talk to qualified experts – those who work in the profession you are interested in. Listen to the advice these experts have to offer. They will be able to help you determine if your career plans are realistic – if you have what it takes to be successful in a particular field.

5. Is timing an important point to consider when seeking advice? Notice the principle in Ecclesiastes 3:1.

When looking for advice from your parents, or anyone else for that matter, choose the right time and place. Use common sense as to when to approach them – particularly when important decisions and weighty matters are involved. Choose a time convenient for them when they can concentrate on what you have to say.

Once you have chosen the right time, be sure to tell the whole story. Don't hide certain facts, since this can prevent your receiving the best possible advice. Then listen, concentrating intently, even if you disagree. By all means be sure you understand what you are being told.

6. What is an excellent, yet often overlooked source of useful, practical wisdom? Job 12:12.

The elderly men and women around us, such as grandparents, are often storehouses of wisdom, waiting to be tapped! Elderly people have the overview of several decades and therefore may have a great deal of advice that can prove quite helpful to you.

Not only can we get advice by speaking to others, but we can also learn from what they have written. The articles on The Bible Fund website (thebiblefund.org), offer valuable instruction and advice on a variety of subjects of interest to people of all ages.

7. Did King Rehoboam of ancient Israel fail to listen to good advice? Read and summarize 1 Kings 12:1-14. What was the sad result? Verses 15-24.

After King Solomon's death, the people of Israel came to King Rehoboam and asked him to lighten the burden of heavy taxation Solomon had placed on them. Rehoboam knew he was inexperienced and needed counsel. So he gathered the counselors of his father and asked their advice. Being older and wiser, they told him to be gentle with the people and be their servant. In return Israel would serve him. But Rehoboam was too self-willed to listen to their wise counsel. He preferred the advice of friends his own age who told him the things he wanted to hear. They said he should be tough on the people. "Show them who is the boss!" they urged.

Of course, this appealed to Rehoboam, who was enjoying his newly-attained power. "I'm king," he thought. "They have to do what I say." So he levied heavier taxes on the people and greater burdens than Solomon. His foolish decision provoked a rebellion that split the nation into two kingdoms.

So be careful about whose advice you follow. Don't assume that friends who are the same age as you have any better answers than you could have come up with yourself.

8. Who does the Bible say is the great Counselor? Isaiah 9:6. Therefore should we also be sure to seek and listen to God's advice? James 1:5; Luke 11:28. Where is that advice found? 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

God, the all-powerful, all-wise Creator, reveals His wisdom and advice through His inspired Word, the Holy Bible. It is in reality God speaking to us! Carefully listen to the advice contained in the Bible, especially in the book of Proverbs, which was written primarily for young people.

Seeking and listening to good advice is vital to leading a happy and successful life. So don't hesitate to ask for it when needed. You'll really be glad you did!