

Insight for the Issues

Prov. 4:23

NE→XT STEPS

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

Two weeks ago we began a new series – “Insight for the Issues” – considering issue that believers must confront during our lifetime. Each generation has its own historical epoch that is unique for their time. Some intellectuals label it *zeitgeist*.

Zeitgeist = the general, intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zeitgeist>

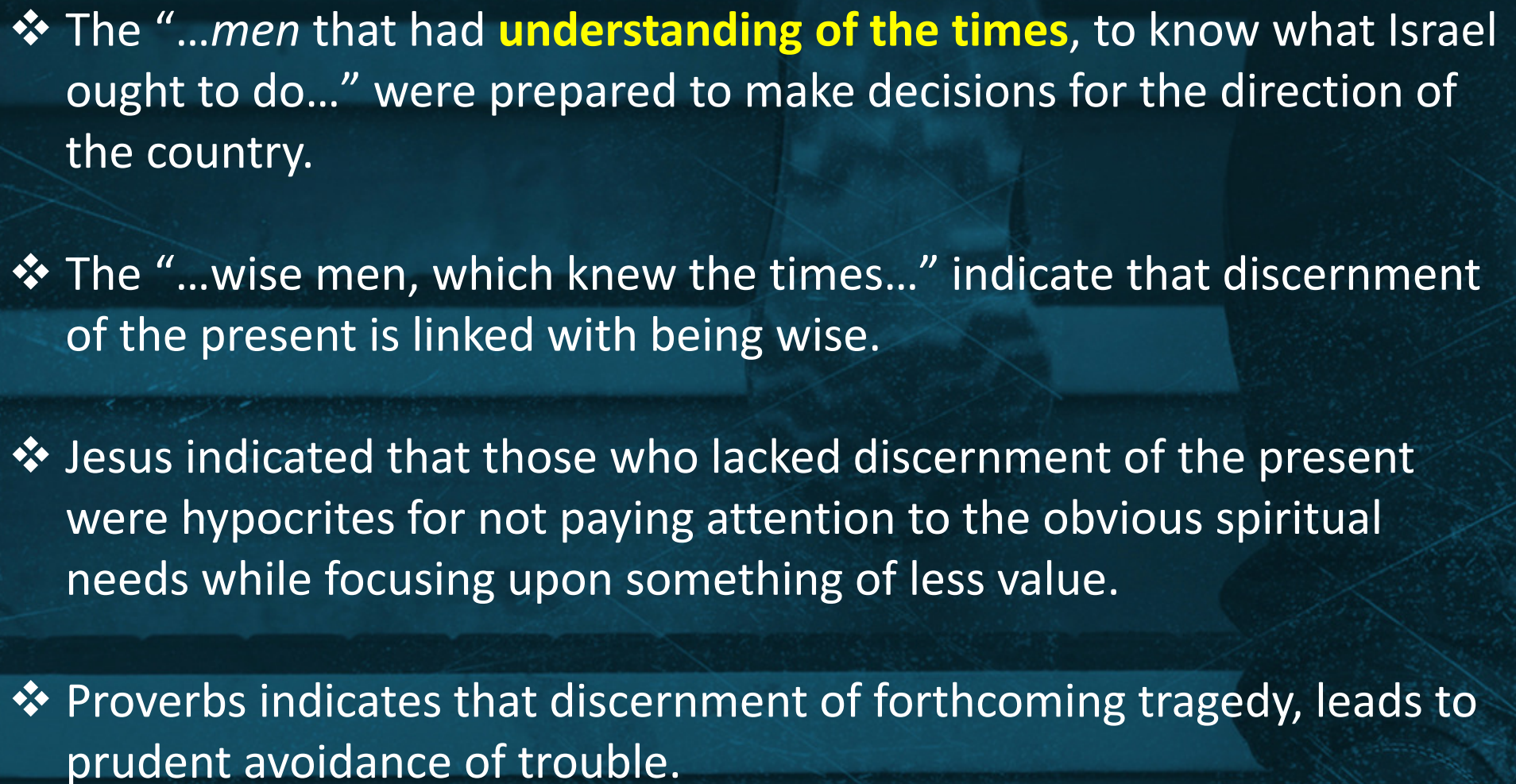
What are the issues facing us in our day? How is a Christian to be prepared to properly face and respond to the constant bombardment of ideas, philosophies, that affect our lives? Should a believer be expected to have a Scriptural perspective or viewpoint regarding politics, lifestyles, and other various issues? Note the following Scriptural perspective:

1 Chron. 12:32 “...**which were men** that had understanding of the **times, to know what Israel ought to do...**”

Est. 1:13 “...the wise men, **which knew the times...**”

Mt. 16:3 “...O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; **but can ye not discern the signs of the times?**”

Prov. 22:3 A prudent *man* **foreseeth...**”

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- ❖ The “...men that had **understanding of the times**, to know what Israel ought to do...” were prepared to make decisions for the direction of the country.
 - ❖ The “...wise men, which knew the times...” indicate that discernment of the present is linked with being wise.
 - ❖ Jesus indicated that those who lacked discernment of the present were hypocrites for not paying attention to the obvious spiritual needs while focusing upon something of less value.
 - ❖ Proverbs indicates that discernment of forthcoming tragedy, leads to prudent avoidance of trouble.

Two weeks ago we noted that the believer must focus upon the spiritual, not the earthly:

I. THE FOCUS IS UPON THE SPIRITUAL RATHER THAN THE EARTHLY

Prov. 4:23 **Keep thy heart** with all diligence; for **out of it are the issues of life.**

A. The Primary Challenge = the Heart

B. The Practical Challenge = The Head

❖ The believer must be in control of his “thought-life.”

Prov. 23:7 For **as he thinketh in his heart**, so is he...”

❖ The believer must “think on” somethings, and NOT think about other things:

2 Cor. 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5 **Casting down imaginations**, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**; ...

7 **Do ye look on things after the outward appearance**? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's.

❖ The soul of a believer, the union of the spirit and body, is affected by our focus:

Tonight, we consider the second aspect for discernment, having “*Insight for the Issues*”

II. THE FOUNDATION IS UPON THE SCRIPTURES RATHER THAN THE EMOTIONAL

- ❖ In order to focus upon the spiritual rather than the earthly, we must go to the Scriptures – “the sword of the Spirit”

A. The Establishment of Spirituality

- ❖ Any spiritual endeavor must begin with the Creator.

Jn. 4:24 **God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him **must worship him in spirit and in truth.**

Eccl. 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and **the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.**

❖ In order to have a “spiritual” relationship with the Creator, we must be on a spiritual plane.

Jn. 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ...

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and **that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.**

Titus 3:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5 **Not by works of righteousness which we have done**, but according to his mercy he saved us, **by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;**

6 Which he shed on us abundantly **through Jesus Christ our Saviour;**

7 That **being justified by his grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

❖ When a sinner is “born-again,” the spirit is made alive, the sinner changed, and now able to pursue a spiritual relationship.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore **if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

❖ We begin such a spiritual relationship with the Creator, by faith:

Eph. 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of **your faith in the Lord Jesus**, and love unto all the saints,

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 **That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:**

18 **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;** that **ye may know** what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,
20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,
21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

❖ After faith, a believer has access to spiritual tools to utilize for spiritual growth:

Eph. 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

Psa. 119:130 **The entrance of thy words giveth light;** it giveth understanding unto the simple.

Rom. 10:17 So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing **by the word of God.**

❖ Utilizing spiritual tools will promote spiritual understanding enabling discernment of “insight for the issues” of our day.

1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared **for them that love him.**

10 But **God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit:** for **the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.**

❖ The source of spirituality is consequential to our relationship with all things that truly are spiritual – God, His Word, His will, and His spiritual people, and His way of life.

Job 32:8 But *there is* a spirit in man: and **the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.**

B. The Exercise of Spirituality

- ❖ Knowing spiritual truth without daily implementation, by believers, is an exercise of futility.

Jas. 2:14 **What doth it profit**, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; **what doth it profit?**

17 Even **so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.**

❖ Spiritual growth, motivated by love for Christ, produces spiritual churches.

Rom. 8:1 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.** ...

5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but **they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.**

6 For to be carnally minded *is* death; but **to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.** ...

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but **if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.**

14 For **as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**

❖ Mechanical Christianity is hollow, producing glorified carnality in shallow “Christians.”

2 Tim. 3:5 **Having a form of godliness,** but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

❖ Spirituality requires the implementation of spiritual discipline:

Gal. 5:16 *This* I say then, **Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**

17 For **the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh**: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that **ye cannot do the things that ye would.**

18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

19 Now **the works of the flesh** are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But **the fruit of the Spirit is** love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 **If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

Eph. 5:9 (For **the fruit of the Spirit is** in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

❖ Spiritual discipline requires spiritual empowerment:

Eph. 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be **strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;**

❖ The Holy Spirit is our strength, comforter, and encouragement.

1 Jn. 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, **because he hath given us of his Spirit.**

Jn. 14:26 But **the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost**, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Jn. 15:26 But when **the Comforter** is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* **the Spirit of truth**, which proceedeth from the Father, **he shall testify of me:**

❖ Our relationship with the Holy Spirit will determine the depth of our spirituality.

Conclusion

Eph. 4:30 And **grieve not the holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

1 Thess. 5:19 **Quench not the Spirit.**

Jn. 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.**

Gal. 5:16 *This* I say then, **Walk in the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. ...

25 **If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**

Rom. 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, **if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.**