

Signs of Real Wisdom (Part 3)

Ecclesiastes 8:1-13

I. A wise person will often have a positive appearance (v.1).

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Who is like the wise?

And who knows the interpretation of a thing?

A man's wisdom makes his face shine,

and the hardness of his face is changed. (v.1)

At the end of ten days it was seen that they were better in appearance . . . (Dan.1:15).

And the king spoke with them, and among all of them none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. Therefore they stood before the king. And in every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanterers that were in all his kingdom. (Dan.1:20)

Those who look to him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. (Psalm 34:5).

“The Christians were different. Their faith appeared to have liberated and relaxed them. There was liveliness, a curiosity, an engagement with the world. . . . Whenever we entered a territory worked by missionaries, we had to acknowledge that something changed in the faces of the people we passed and spoke to: something in their eyes.”

- From “Why Africa Needs God”
by Matthew Parris

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in submitting to questionable human authority
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I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him. (v.2)

Or,

Keep the king's command because of your oath to God.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (Rom.13:1)

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2. Be cautious (vv.3-4).

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2. Be cautious (vv.3-4).

Be not hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand in an evil cause, for he does whatever he pleases. For the word of the king is supreme, and who may say to him, “What are you doing?” (vv.3-4)

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Don't foolishly hurt yourself.

III. A wise person is focused on honoring God above all (vv.10-13).

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Though a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, yet I know that it will be well with those who fear God, because they fear before him. (v.12)

“The first and foremost conviction we must possess is that we are called to ‘worship the Lord our God, and serve him only.’ We are always servants of God first and the servants of others second. There is no place in Christian thinking for any ‘God and ...,’ for ‘God and ...’ is idolatry.”

- Iain Provan

Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”
(Luke 14:25-26)

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:37-38)