

Introduction:

Do you want to be victorious? I know you do. I'd like to share with you one of the absolute necessities to victory in your life. What I'm about to share with you applies to victory in pretty much every aspect of your life: school, work, family, finances, health, etc. However, we are focusing on our spiritual victory. We are in a daily battle against an enemy who is unscrupulous. He doesn't care who we are or where we've come from. **Proverb 24:6** and its context give us a clear key to victory. Examine what it says and learn what it implies for our victory.

"For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory."

Discussion:

I. You won't win the victory on accident.

- A. Consider the entire context of this particular statement (**Proverbs 24:3-7**). It begins by explaining that a house is built by wisdom and established by understanding. Knowledge will fill it with precious and pleasant riches. Have you ever known a house to be built by accident? "How did that house get there?" "I don't know, I was just playing with some bricks and lumber and the next thing I knew, it was a house." Have you ever known a house to be decorated by accident? "Who picked these colors for this room?" "I don't know, we just threw a bunch of paint in here and voilà." "How did this furniture get here or these pictures on the wall?" "Well, let me tell you about that. It happened completely by accident. I didn't mean for any of that to be there, but I was carrying this stuff in, tripped, and just loved where it all landed."
- B. This is obviously silly. Houses don't get built and decorated by accident. Your victory won't happen by accident either. In fact, it can't happen by accident. If you want the victory, you have to pursue it on purpose. You have to pursue it by wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

II. You won't win the victory alone.

- A. This is the heart of the Proverbialist's statement. And it is said repeatedly in Proverbs (**Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 20:18**).
- B. Far too often, we want to demonstrate our independence. We want to demonstrate that we can do it on our own, that we don't need anyone. Far too often, we carry around our image consultant with us in our own head, counseling us not to open up to anyone lest they find out what is really going on inside our homes or our heads. So our interactions with others are kept at surface levels where we talk about weather, politics, sports, and everyone else who is so messed up but never digging underneath the surface of our own struggles, questions, and spiritual needs. **Proverbs 27:9** says the sweetness of a friend comes from his earnest counsel. If we have no friends that we are willing to receive counsel from, we don't have any sweet friends.
- C. Of course, there are those who fool themselves, who pretend to seek counsel, but only seek affirmation. Instead of opening up with complete honesty to a wise friend, they twist the situation to put themselves in the best light and to guide the counsel they will receive to simply support what they wanted to hear in the first place. Or, as soon as a counselor doesn't simply affirm what they wanted to hear, they dismiss it. This is a façade. Don't fool yourself with it.
- D. I know I'm looking at some of the wisest people in the world. The folks in this room have decided to pursue Jesus Christ. And that takes wisdom. However, I also know from personal experience that while I can often look with wisdom on your struggles, I struggle to look with wisdom on mine. I'm sure I've shared with you before a phrase I once heard that I think sums this up nicely. It's hard to read the label when you're inside the bottle. And for all the wisdom I can offer others when I hear their problems, I've often found that I could probably get better advice from the drunk sleeping on the park bench than I would give myself when I'm in the middle of the struggle and battle.
- E. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12** is well known among us. Two are better than one. But that is only the case when we rely on each other, counsel each other, support each other. It takes so much more than just showing up to the same building a couple of times per week. You won't win the victory alone. Find wise counselors who will help you wage your war. That is where the victory lies.

III. You won't win the victory with foolish counselors.

- A. Take special note of **Proverbs 24:7**. "Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the gate he does not open his mouth." The gate refers to the place in the city where the wise elders would gather to confer, advise, and counsel. The fool keeps his mouth shut there because he has too often been shown foolish by the wise in the gates. The problem, of course, is too often we don't really like the wisdom we find in the gates and so we leave the gate to listen to the fool's counsel.
- B. When the proverbialist tells us the abundance of counselors provides victory, he doesn't mean that counsel from just any person is helpful. He means we need to find wise counselors. We need to find counselors who have walked the road ahead of us and know the twists and turns we are going to face. We need to find counselors who have climbed the mountains we want to climb. We need to find the counselors who have tripped over the obstacles that will be in our way and have been picked back up by the grace of God to learn from their mistakes.
- C. Perhaps the greatest example of violating this principle is Rehoboam. In **I Kings 12**, all of Israel came to Shechem to make Rehoboam king. But Jeroboam and the Israelites begged Rehoboam to lighten the load of their taxes and conscripted service. Rehoboam asked for three days to deliberate. He called in the older men who had counseled Solomon before him. They counseled that he do as the people ask. But Rehoboam didn't like their counsel and he gathered men of his own age around him who counseled him to make the burden even heavier. Rehoboam listened to the younger men. When Israel heard, 10 of the tribes split off the kingdom under the leadership of Jeroboam. Because Rehoboam opted to listen to fools, he lost 70% of his kingdom. And, of course, keep in mind Rehoboam's biggest mistake here. He didn't seek the counsel of the Lord. That would have made clear whose counsel was wise and whose was foolish. Which reveals one of the mistakes we often make. When we hear opposing counsel, we often decide based on how each piece of counsel makes us feel rather than on how each piece of counsel compares to God's Word.
- D. When you are looking for a wise counselor, keep the following in mind. It is very rare for someone your own age to have much more wisdom than you have. This is especially true for young people in their teens and twenties. As we get older, differing experiences can make differences, but in those young decades so little of life has been experienced it is rare for any to have more wisdom than the others in their age bracket. When we are talking about spiritual victory, keep in mind that counsel given by friends in false religion, even false Christianities, and friends in the world is not going to be the kind of wisdom you want. Oh, often, these counselors will tell you what you want to hear. But be careful lest you divide your kingdom and lose the blessing God was promising you. And while people smack in the same problems you're in may provide support (and that is good), they rarely offer wise counsel. After all, they're stuck in the same problem you're in. Finally, I don't want to be so simplistic as to say only follow the counsel of those who say the exact opposite of what you are thinking. But I encourage you to find counselors who will at least challenge you with different perspectives. If all your counselors are merely saying what you want to hear, you need to find the 10th man who will challenge you with a different viewpoint and then consider it honestly. In the end, you may stick with the 9, but at least you do so having been challenged and therefore thinking through your position. And I can tell you, if you are hiding your thoughts and plans from the person you know will counsel against it, you are indicating that you already know what you are doing is foolish.

IV. You will win the victory when you purposefully surround yourself with wise counselors.

- A. If we won't win the victory by accident and we won't win the victory alone and we won't win the victory with foolish counselors, when will we win the victory? It is quite obvious. We will only win the victory when we purposefully surround ourselves with wise counselors. Then and only then will the victory be won.
- B. There is not much more to say under this point, but to simply ask a question. Who are your counselors? Who are you listening to? This is important, because your counselors will make or break you, but in the end it will still be your responsibility and you will be the one held accountable for your life.

Conclusion:

As we asked at the beginning, do you want to be victorious? Do you want it badly enough to set aside your claim that you have all wisdom and you can do it all on your own? Do you want it badly enough to listen to even those who will counsel you contrary to what feels natural? Do you want it badly enough to purposefully surround yourself with wise counsellors? Because that is the only way you are going to win this war called life.