
A Message from the Dean...

Information, Knowledge, and Wisdom

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn her seven pillars . . . Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight." -Proverbs 9:1, 6

In an interview last year, Henry Kissinger, then 91-yes, he's still alive-was discussing the 24/7 news cycle and the challenge of making good decisions. He said, "One needs to differentiate between information, knowledge and wisdom. In the internet era they tend to get mixed up. The more time one spends simply absorbing information, the less time one has to apply wisdom. And then there's common sense. Lord Salisbury had long periods of reflection in which he applied wisdom and common sense."

Wisdom seems to be in short supply these days. Meanwhile, we have access to a lot of information. Psychologists now talk about how we can become debilitated when we have too much information. This is not a recent phenomenon. The sociologist Georg Simmel (1858-1918), hypothesized that the overload of sensations in the modern urban world caused city dwellers to become jaded and interfered with their ability to react to new situations.

The book of Proverbs calls us to wisdom: "Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight." Insight or wisdom comes not from information overload but from reflecting on what we do know.

Wisdom comes from reading wise things, like the Bible-hello! But more than that, wisdom comes from thoughtful reflection. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf tells Bilbo at one place, "I'm going away to have a good long think." Yes, at times we know an awful lot of information, but information doesn't necessarily produce wisdom. It may only produce in us the mastery of trivia.

God, who is the source of all wisdom, imparts his wisdom through the Holy Spirit. But we have to cooperate with God on that: through reading, prayer, reflection, and silence.

Do people consider you a person of wisdom, or do they simply see you as a know-it-all?

Blessings,

Dean Michell+
