

Stomach Problems / Proverbs – The Secret of Wisdom

Tammy: One day, Baako began to feel sick. He had a fever, and he started to have diarrhea. He ran to the latrine several times, and then he started vomiting. He felt awful! He was terribly weak, and soon he couldn't get up or walk any more...

Carol: Hello and welcome to *Women of Hope*... It's good to be with you. I'm Carol...and of course that was Tammy telling us the story of Baako. I wonder if you have felt the way Baako did? I think most of us have at some time. Tammy, tell us what happened next...

Tammy: Well, Baako's mother could tell that his body was very hot, and he couldn't drink anything, so she took him to the hospital.

At the hospital, Baako was so weak that the health care worker immediately put an IV tube into his arm to replace all the fluids that his body had lost. Soon, he felt better, but he was very sleepy.

In the afternoon, his friends Tali and Juma came to visit him in the hospital. They looked at the IV bag hanging on the pole, and were discussing what it was, when the health care worker came into the room. They knew him because he had given talks at their school a few times.

"Hello, boys!" he said. "That's an IV tube. See the plastic bag attached to it, it has water in it mixed with salt and sugar, because Baako's body has lost too much water, salt and sugar with his diarrhea. The IV fluids are going straight into his blood, and will make him feel better."

Tali asked the health worker why Baako had become sick.

"We were told that if you make a latrine, you won't get diarrhea anymore," he said.

"Baako's father and neighbor both made latrines, so why is Baako getting sick?"

The health care worker thought for a moment, and then answered, "Building a latrine is very good because it keeps the yard clean, and stops the feces from smelling or washing down

into the river. But building a latrine is only half of the solution. Tell me,” he said, “When you get diarrhea or start vomiting, which part of your body is having a problem?”

“Your stomach,” said Juma.

“Right! And there can be some different things that might be causing that problem. Maybe you ate too many green mangos!”

Both the boys laughed because they had done that many times, and it always resulted in diarrhea.

The health worker continued, “But that sort of diarrhea doesn’t smell bad and doesn’t cause a fever, and it only lasts a little while. But bad diarrhea and vomiting is caused by tiny creatures getting into your stomach and causing trouble.”

Tali and Juma looked at each other, their eyes wide open. Tiny creatures?

The health worker pointed to a poster on the wall. “I’m sure you have seen worms before. I have given you worm medicine in the clinic, because worms are very common in children’s stomachs.”

He pointed to another picture. “These are smaller than worms, but they cause a lot of trouble if they get into your stomach. They are amoebas and other nasty little creatures. But there is another group of trouble-makers that you can’t see at all unless you use a very strong microscope. They are different types of bacteria. You must have learned about them in school.”

The boys both nodded. They looked at the picture that showed some different shaped bacteria.

“OK,” said the health care worker, “bacteria and amoeba and worms cause problems if they get into your stomach. But HOW do they get into your stomach?” he asked.

Carol: I wonder if **you** know how these germs and other little creatures get into your stomach? Let’s think about that a bit before we ask Tammy to tell us the rest of the story . .

Carol: You're with us today on *Women of Hope*. And we have just asked the interesting question "how do the bacteria get into your stomach?" Let's find out what the boys answered to the question – ‘

Tammy: Tali answered, "Well, they would have to get in through your mouth I suppose!"

"Yes, exactly!" said the health worker, "They *do* get in through your mouth. But they don't just fly in...they have to ride on something. What do you think they could ride on? What goes into your mouth?"

Juma always chewed on his thumbnail when he was concentrating hard, so now he started chewing it again. Tali looked at him, and suddenly said, "Our fingers! We put our fingers into our mouths when we lick them or chew them, or when we eat with them."

The health worker smiled. "Yes, that's right! But just think for a minute where your fingers have been. You worked in the garden and got dirt on them. Then you took the cattle out of the pen and tied them to trees for the day, and you got dung on your hands. Then you went to the latrine and wiped yourself afterwards. Your hands have got LOTS and LOTS of bacteria and amoebas and worm eggs on them! And then you put your fingers in your mouth! THAT's how all those tiny creatures get into your stomach! You can have a very simple latrine or a very expensive toilet - one from the city, but it's your HANDS that take the bacteria and amoeba and worm eggs into your mouth."

Tali and Juma pulled faces and Juma quickly took his thumbnail out of his mouth. Yuk!! Of course! They both looked at their hands. They couldn't SEE any dirt there, but they knew that bacteria and amoeba and worm eggs were much too small to be seen.

"What should we do, then?" they asked together.

The health worker took them over to the hand basin near the door.

"It's actually very simple," he said. "Just remember to wash your hands after working in the dirt...or handling animals...or touching a sick person...and especially after going to the toilet. And ALWAYS wash your hands before you eat food."

Use soap and water and wash under your nails and between your fingers, like this,” he said, as he demonstrated how to wash their hands. “It’s very good that you now use a latrine, but it’s always very important to always wash your hands well afterwards.”

The boys watched him carefully. Then he gave them the soap and asked them to wash their hands. The soap smelled nice, and they had fun making lots of bubbles. They scrubbed the backs of their hands, too.

“Don’t forget your nails and between your fingers,” he reminded them, as he walked away to see some other patients in the hospital.

Tali and Juma finished washing their hands and rinsing the soap off with water. Then they went back into the room to tell Baako everything that they had learned.

It wasn’t long before Baako was well again and was back at school with his friends. But all of them were very careful from then on to always wash their hands after going to the toilet or working with soil or animals...and *always* before they ate their meals. They didn’t want any tiny creatures getting into their stomachs!

Carol: Today our friend Sally is back with us on *Women of Hope! Welcome Sally!*

Sally: Thanks Carol.

Are you someone who likes to *know* things? My youngest son is *always* asking questions...just like Tali and Juma. He wants to know how flies walk up walls? ...Why bubbles are colored? ...How a radio works?

Hmmm...usually that’s when I realize there’s so much I don’t know!

My *older* son is *always* reading. He reads books, newspapers, magazine articles. He likes to read to learn; about stars and planets, or how people lived long ago, or new inventions and how they work.

It can be a good thing to know lots of stuff...but do you think knowing lots of stuff...having knowledge...is the same as having wisdom?

You see, in God’s word, the Bible, the Book of Proverbs says that ‘*wisdom* is more precious than rubies.’ (*Proverbs 8:11*) I’ve never seen a real ruby, but I know they’re

very beautiful, and people are willing to pay a *lot* of money to own one. I've heard that there's a heart shaped Burma Ruby necklace worth 14 million US dollars – imagine that! So if wisdom is worth more than rubies, it's worth chasing after don't you think?

There are lots of proverbs about wisdom so it must be very important. Proverbs says that 'a wise son brings joy to his father.' (*Proverbs 15:20*)

I'd agree with that, wouldn't you? A wise son - or a wise daughter - is one who makes wise choices - in friendships, in lifestyle and about money matters. Any parent is proud of a child that makes wise decisions...big or small. One proverb (*Proverbs 19:11*) says that wisdom gives us patience... Here it is: "A [woman's] wisdom gives her patience – it is her glory to overlook an offence."

Patience is fine when everything's going well, but that's not usually when we need it! It's especially hard to be patient when we're tired, or sick, or busy isn't it? That's when I really need wisdom... "A [woman's] wisdom gives her patience – it is her glory to overlook an offence."

When someone does something to offend me, I need the wisdom of God to overlook the offence – to ignore it or even to show love in return. God's wisdom helps me see things through *his* eyes and to see what is important and what I need to focus on. It helps me to understand others better and to be patient with them even if they have said or done something that offends me.

Hmmm... What else does Proverbs say?

A wise person is a good housekeeper – someone who plans ahead and thinks of others. Listen to this one: "In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish [woman] devours, (or eats up) all she has." God's wisdom helps me to think of my family and to plan for shopping and meals. When I shop I need to plan wisely and spend carefully. When I shop I often pray and ask God for that wisdom so that I make the right choices for my family.

A wise person also knows how to put her priorities in the right order...she can sort out what's important and what is not. Listen to this one...(Proverbs 23:4) "Do not wear yourself out to get rich; have the wisdom to show restraint (or control). Riches

disappear in the blink of an eye.” God’s wisdom helps me concentrate on the important things he has given me to do, even if I think they’re boring! Too often we get caught up in things that will not last – like riches, instead of concentrating on those things that *do* last – like other people, and our relationship with God.

And wisdom gives understanding of what is “just and fair.” (*Proverbs 2:9*) This next proverb says: “Then you will understand what is right and just and fair—every good path.” Mums need that kind of wisdom, don’t they?? Do you need wisdom in raising your children? Do you need to be wise in the things you do every day, like discipline, choosing who does each chore, and knowing how to show love to each child? I know I do! Wisdom helps us to understand what is right and just and fair even in the little things.

The more I read about wisdom, the more I can see how precious it is.

I read (*present tense*) that I am blessed if I find wisdom. It is more profitable than silver. Wisdom’s ways are pleasant. Her paths are peace. She is a tree of life. (*ch.3*) And I guess if I am blessed, so is my family and household.

So...where does this wisdom come from? Do I need to read lots of books, or listen to great teachers? Do I need to attend universities and study to get a degree?

Listen to chapter 2 of Proverbs: “The **Lord gives wisdom**; from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding...”

The wisdom is not mine, it’s not yours, it’s not found in books or at university. It is God’s wisdom!

And the Bible tells us how it can be *ours*. In Proverbs Chapter 3 (5-7 NLT) it says:

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and do not depend on your own understanding.
Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Don’t be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil.”

Did you hear that? “Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own.”

You and I are to trust – not in ourselves, but in God. That means we follow his way of life and his priorities. We put God, and then others, before ourselves. It all starts with trusting God.

Trusting him because *he is trustworthy*.

Trusting him because *he knows what is good for us* better than we know ourselves.

Putting what God wants for us at the center of our decision making.

Asking ourselves, “What does God want me to do here?”

There is one very well-known Proverb: perhaps you've heard it before? It's from chapter 9, and I think it's the key to our search for wisdom. It says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” It's a good one to remember. Let's say it together:

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

To fear God is to respect and trust him. It's only when I understand God's character...and follow his will...and his standards that I begin to learn true wisdom.

And how am I to know the great Creator God? Surely he is too deep for me to understand.

He is too high for me to reach.

He is infinite...endless. I am only finite...my life will come to an end one day.

Yet the infinite and eternal God has shown himself to us in Jesus Christ. He came to take the punishment for the wrong things we do. He died so that we can live. By ourselves we are ignorant of God and foolish in our ways, but in Christ we *know* God and are made wise in the way we live.

So what *is* wisdom? It is personally trusting God in *all* things – *all* the time. It's saying, “I don't have the answers, but God does. His ways are best.” It's asking

yourself, 'What would God do in this situation?' He is good, and kind and loving and patient. He is also just and perfect. And then it's asking God for *his* understanding, *his* love and *his* eyes to see what needs to be done.

And the more we get to know God the more we begin to understand how we are to live, how to make good choices, and how to get along with others, Remember, God is interested in the details – the little things – that happen each day in your life. He wants you to look to him for help as you raise your children...do the shopping...make friends...and go to work. And as our lives reflect God's wisdom, others will see a difference in the way we do things each day...run our house...and care for our families. How we do our work and treat our neighbors. Knowing God changes every part of our lives!

So what are you doing to get to know God better? Maybe you don't have much knowledge, but are you growing in *wisdom*?? When you find wisdom, Proverbs says, you find life. (*Proverbs 8:32*)

And when we trust God, we have found the beginning of wisdom. Will you begin by asking him today – right now – for his wisdom in what you are doing today?

Carol: Thank you Sally – maybe you'd like to pray for our listener today...

Sally: Sure, I'd love to do that...

Father, God, Thank you that when we come to know you, we find wisdom. Please help our listener today to find you – to learn to trust you – and so to find real wisdom. Thank you for sending Jesus Christ to take the punishment for the wrong things we do – to show us your love. Please help her to make wise choices in her life. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Carol: We'd like to share a letter from a listener before we say goodbye today. She learned as she listened to *Women of Hope* how to change what came out of her mouth.

She said:

"I am a grown woman, but the way I lived with my daughter-in-law was not healthy. Soon after I heard the *Women of Hope* program, my life changed and my

relationships at home changed...for the best. From then on we were best friends and together we listen to *Women of Hope*."

Tammy: We're so happy that your life has changed, and that you are now best friends with your daughter in law. May your relationship continue to grow as you trust in God. We pray that he will help you to keep doing and saying kind and helpful things to each other.

Carol: Maybe you have a story as well – or your life has been changed because of something you heard right here on WHO. Why not write and tell us about it. You can write to us in care of this station or at Women of Hope.... The address: Hannah@twr.org. That's Hannah@twr.org.

Tammy: If you have missed a program or would even like to hear one again you can do that on our website projecthannah.org that's projecthannah.org. or by visiting us on our Facebook page.

Carol: Or you can even "download the free iphone app "Project Hannah"

But most of all, we hope you will be with us again next time. Until then, have a great week filled with God's blessings.

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