

The Wise Church is a Counseling Church

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[0 : 00] Okay, let me start by asking a question that I've asked in our journey class a few times. So those of you who have been in our journey class over the last couple years have heard this probably more than once.

And so you know the drill. You know how to play along with this. So here's how it works. I'm going to ask you how many of you are counselors. So how many of you are counselors? Raise your hand. Okay, a few. Got a few hands up.

All right, so let me ask another question. In the last month, how many of you have uttered a sentence that includes the following phrases? Anytime in the last month you've said something like this.

You should. You ought to. You have to. You need to. Raise your hands if you've said anything like that in the last few months. All right, got your hands up? Raise them high. Keep your hands up. Some of you have not been using the English language in the last few months. If you have been saying those words in another language, keep your hands up. All right, everybody, keep your hands up. I didn't tell you to put them down yet, okay? All right, so keep them up until I tell you.

[0 : 58] In the last month, how many of you have given counsel? All right, your hands are still up. Great. In the last month, how many of you acted as counselors? Your hands are still up. Great. The point I'm making here, and now you can put your hand down, every person is a counselor.

Everyone, every human being is a counselor. Every person acts as a counselor. Whether or not you've made counseling your profession. You can't help being a counselor.

You're a born counselor. You regularly give counsel to others. The question is not whether or not you are a counselor. The question is whether you are a good counselor or a bad counselor.

Are you a good counselor or a bad counselor? Do you dispense good counsel or do you dispense bad counsel? Now, let me throw out this question.

What percentage of churches do you suppose have a counseling ministry? Any ideas? How many churches have a counseling ministry? Five, five percent?

[2 : 07] Okay. Don't they all? Don't they all? That's a good perspective there, right?

You know, if you're talking, is there like a formal counseling ministry that they advertise on their website or something like that? I'm not sure what the percentage is. It's probably something really small, like five, maybe ten if you're really lucky.

But probably something really small. But given what we just said about every person being a counselor, I think Linda may be on the right track. A hundred percent.

Every church has a counseling ministry. Every church is filled with counselors who are counseling. The question is not whether Squamish Baptist Church has a counseling ministry.

The question is whether Squamish Baptist Church has a good counseling ministry or a bad counseling ministry. Are we a church that is made up of good counselors or bad counselors?

Someone just whisper bad.

[3 : 10] Did I just hear that? Well, now we know. Here's what I want to propose to you this morning. I'm going to state it now. And so I'm going to state it up front.

And I believe that you'll see this truth come out as we examine several passages of Scripture this morning. Now, usually I want to get to God's Word as soon as possible. It makes me nervous to just go on and on and on.

We haven't looked at the Scriptures yet. But I do think we need to get some preliminaries out of the way before we go there so that we can understand the Scripture properly. And so to begin to get the right perspective, the right frame on what we're going to look at in Scripture, I'd like to propose that counseling is a form of wisdom.

Counseling is a form of wisdom. And the reason I want to say that is because I want to put it in terms of biblical categories, to give it a biblical vocabulary so that you can see that the Bible actually has a ton to say about counseling.

If you are wise, you are a good counselor. If you're not wise, you're a bad counselor. You're going to be a bad counselor.

[4 : 20] And it really is that simple. And if that's the case, then it is absolutely imperative that every one of you sitting here needs to become wise. Because you're already counseling.

So if you're going to already be out there counseling, make it good counseling. That's the only way that you can move from being a bad counselor to a good counselor.

It's the only way to move from being a good counselor to being an even better counselor. You need to be wise. If you were here last week, you saw how God's Word, the Bible, the Bible urges us toward wisdom.

God the Holy Spirit is urging us toward wisdom. That means that God's Word is urging us to be good counselors. The wise church is a counseling church.

The wise church is a counseling church. Now maybe it has never occurred to you to connect wisdom with counseling. And for some reason that even though counseling is something that's a passion of mine, it's important, and I think of it as valuable, but for some reason I'd never really made that connection until recently, connecting wisdom with counseling.

[5 : 34] I think there's a few mental blocks that I know I have and maybe you have, things we need to get past, things that have gotten in the way of making that connection. The first block is, I think, a bit of a cultural block.

In our culture, we believe that counseling, we tend to use that word only in formal and professional contexts. To be a counselor, you need to receive training, degrees, certification.

You need to start a practice, charge an hourly fee. You need to have an office and then a couch or a chair for your client while you sit there with a notepad listening to their mental problems, emotional problems, relationship problems, financial problems, career problems.

And I'm not saying this to discredit professional counselors. There's value in that. There's a lot of value in that. All those cultural practices, they do exist for a reason. Frankly, they exist to protect people from bad counselors.

But in most cultures, in our present day, in most cultures throughout history, counseling was never that professionalized. This is a very Western phenomenon.

[6 : 38] Kings might have had a professional counselor, a court counselor, who would coach them through a lot of the stuff and challenges they faced. But otherwise, if you weren't a king, you would go to a sage.

You'd go to a man or a woman who possessed unusual wisdom. Now, remember last week that definition of wisdom, a definition given by J.I. Packer that I found immensely helpful.

Wisdom in Scripture means choosing the best and noblest end at which to aim, along with the most appropriate and effective means to it.

Wisdom in Scripture means choosing the best and noblest end at which to aim, along with the most appropriate and effective means to it. So, throughout history, the idea was there would be wise men and women who would guide you through all of the challenges you face in life.

But now, in our churches, I would put out there that there is a vacuum of wisdom. We have a wisdom vacuum in our churches. There is really no expressed demand for wise men and women.

[7 : 45] How many churches have you been in where there is some sort of advertising, we need wise people. We need you to be wise. You just don't hear that.

Instead, what happens is when people face problems, we try to handle them in a variety of ways that aren't ideal.

We either don't deal with them at all, we just pretend that we aren't having problems in our life, or we find some way to cope with them on our own. We've got all sorts of coping mechanisms and techniques, things we turn to to try to get past our problems without really resolving them.

If things get really, really bad, maybe, then maybe we go to a professional counselor. You know, we're like that person, you know, we've all got that relative who refuses to go to the doctor, right?

You could have your arms sawed off and be like, well, I'll go in tomorrow if I'm not feeling any better, right? And we're like that with counseling. I'm not going to go, I'm not going to seek counseling unless things get really horrible, unless my whole being is rotting away, unless my marriage is

totally falling apart.

[8 : 59] Only then am I going to seek counseling. When it comes to life decisions, instead of looking for wise counsel, sometimes we make a mistake, we've got a theological category, that's in error.

We talked, BK talked about this a few weeks ago when he preached on finding the will of God. Some of us are busy seeking God's individual will for our life, this idea that God's got this special, unique plan for me, and I've got to figure out what it is so I don't screw up God's plan for my life. I've got to find just the right job, get married to the right person, make the right, just the right financial decisions, do all these things. And if I don't make just the right decision every time, man, I'm not getting God's best. And we live in fear.

The Bible teaches that God has a sovereign will or plan for the entire universe, a will or plan that governs everything that actually takes place. Nothing happens unless it happens according to God's sovereign plan.

The Bible also teaches that God has a moral will or law for us. That's our responsibility. That's what we are meant to know and do. Some people want God also to have an individual will for them, that blueprint for your life that you have, that you go on a treasure hunt to discover.

[10 : 16] And we fret over. But there isn't any such idea or teaching in Scripture. Scripture is instead filled with a call to wisdom. You want to know how to make decisions.

You want to know how to handle the problems in your life. You want to know how to think and speak and act in ways, you know, in ways in which, you know, the way forward isn't always very clear.

That's what wisdom is for. That's why God wants you to be wise. That's why wisdom is calling out. The call to know and to choose your best and noblest end.

The call to find the most appropriate and effective means to that end. That's the call of wisdom. If I were to use an analogy, our life and our journey with the Lord, it's like a hike up a mountain.

We've got one singular end, the peak of that mountain, to glorify God and to enjoy him forever, to fear the Lord. That is the peak. God's law. We talk a lot about God's law.

[11 : 22] It's like the trail going up that mountain. You want to stay on the trail. You don't want to stray off into the forest. Sometimes you're like, well, if I go off into the forest, that'll get me that direct route up the mountain. That'll bring the joy and the pleasure and satisfaction that I've been seeking.

You've got to stay on the trail, even when it looks like it's not going in the right direction. God's law is the trail. Now, here's where wisdom fits in. God's wisdom governs where you put your feet.

God's wisdom governs where you put your feet. Wisdom says, keep your feet on the path. Stay within the law of the Lord. But there's a lot of room to move in that path.

Stay on the path. You won't get covered in ticks. You won't get attacked by cougars and bears if you're on there. Wisdom also tells you where in the path you put your feet. Because every mountain path, you know, if you look at this picture, you've got rocks there.

If you put your feet the wrong way on one of those rocks, you might turn your ankle. In similar ways, there's things you can do. You can manage your finances in a way that's not sinful, but sure is not very wise.

[12 : 24] Right? I could, you know, take all of my money and take all of my savings and just hand it all over to the poor right now.

And that would be a good, that would not be a sinful thing. In fact, that might be a good thing. But here's the problem is, now what I've done is, I've completely gutted all my savings and now I've lost the ability to give to missionaries.

I've lost the ability to give to my church. I've put myself in a position now where any financial hardship will put a burden on other people that wasn't necessary.

Many of us have spent our lives putting our feet in the wrong places. Many of us have the mental, financial, relational, emotional, physical scars to show for putting our feet in the wrong places.

We need wisdom, and so we need counselors. So the wise church is a counseling church. So in our church, who is able to counsel? In our church, who is able to counsel a brother or sister who has wandered off into the forest?

[13 : 28] Who is able to counsel a brother or sister who keeps putting their feet in the wrong places on the path? Well, finally, we're getting to God's word. I can finally breathe a sigh of relief. We're going to discover what the Holy Spirit has to say.

And so the first passage of scripture we're going to turn to is found in Romans chapter 15. In Romans chapter 15, it should be up on the screen. Romans 15 verse 14, here's what the apostle Paul writes.

I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.

So, first question. Who is Paul speaking to? Who is he speaking to? To the church. The brothers. He often talks about the church in terms of a family, because it really is our family.

His brothers and his sisters. His fellow members of God's family. And what do his fellow believers possess? Well, they are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge.

[14 : 35] What ability does this give them? They are able to instruct one another. Other translations, like the King James Version, use the word admonish. So the idea is not merely that, you know, oh, you're instructing one another.

Sit down in a classroom setting, and I will give you a theology lesson. It's not merely that. Not merely communicating academic ideas. The idea is to correct wrong patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

And to instruct people in how to live wisely. That's what it means to admonish, to instruct one another. And we can do this, because we've been given the Holy Spirit.

He is our chief counselor. The counselor sent from the Father. And the primary training material that the Holy Spirit has given to his counselors is the words of Scripture.

The words that the Holy Spirit breathed out or inspired. So in 2 Timothy chapter 3, Paul tells his protegee, he tells Timothy, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.

[15 : 49] And how from childhood, you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The sacred writings are able to make you wise so that you depend on Christ by faith, so you teach others how to do the same, correcting, instructing, equipping them to live a life that honors God in every respect.

Every believer, every believer who's been given the Holy Spirit when you believed, who received the Holy Spirit, who is learning the words of Scripture in the context of a local church, every such believer can be wise.

So who is able to counsel? All of you. Who is able to counsel? All of you. Everyone who believes. Some of you who are younger, maybe you're wondering, how am I going to speak words of counsel?

[17 : 05] If you're humble, if you're realistic, then you realize you lack so much knowledge, you lack the experience of those who are older, and it's good to be humble, to recognize how much you don't know.

But if you search for wisdom in God's Word, you can be wise. I once had a woman in another church who I was talking with her about my desire to become a pastor, and she wondered about my qualifications for being a pastor, which is always nice.

And she observed that I wasn't married. And she said, well, then I'm assuming you wouldn't do any marriage counseling, right? You wouldn't do any marriage counseling.

And it's common to have that mindset that experience is really the only teacher that we have.

Experience is the only capable teacher. In other words, unless you're married, you shouldn't ever be a marriage counselor.

Experience is immensely helpful in learning wisdom. It really is. But even more wisdom can be gained from another source. In Psalm 119, the psalmist writes, in verses 98 through 100, your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.

[18 : 18] I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.

I understand more than those who are elderly, those who are experienced. Your wisdom can far outstrip your experience. Your wisdom can far outstrip your experience if you meditate on, if you preoccupy yourself with the words of God in Scripture.

That's one reason why we're doing these fighter verses in the sermon. We want you to be wise. We want you to have words of wisdom available all the time, like cash on hand.

Available to give away at a moment's notice. If you want to be wise, memorize, mull over these words. If you want your children to be wise, teach them these words.

Help them memorize them. Help them remember them. Some may object that there's a lot that's necessary for life that Scripture doesn't cover. There's a lot that we need that Scripture doesn't talk about.

[19 : 27] When we talk about the sufficiency of Scripture, I want to be clear here. We're saying that everything you need to live the good life, to live the life that God has called you to, everything that you need is contained in it, everything that matters most.

In his book, *Taking God at His Word*, it's a book that's on our resource table out there if you'd like to read it. Kevin DeYoung writes, To affirm the sufficiency of Scripture is not to suggest that the Bible tells us everything we want to know about everything, but it does tell us everything we need to know about what matters most.

Scripture does not give exhaustive information on every subject, but in every subject on which it speaks, it says only what is true. And in its truth, we have enough knowledge to turn from sin, find a Savior, make good decisions, please God, and get to the root of our deepest problems.

So when we talk about wisdom being our best and noblest end at which to aim, Scripture tells us that. Scripture helps us there. It tells us what the chief end of every human being is.

Scripture tells us what our purpose, what our mission in life is. Scripture makes us confident in our proper end even when many people around us, unlike us, they have no reason to be confident that they are living for the right end.

[20 : 51] That's the message in our culture. You know, there is no proper end for a human being. You just got to make up your own. Make up your own meaning and purpose and direction in life.

Hope you get there. When it comes to the wisdom of knowing our best and noblest end, only a believer in Jesus Christ can have that wisdom. Only a believer in Christ can make the fear of the Lord, can make glorifying God and enjoying him forever that best and noblest end.

In that respect, only a Christian can be wise. Now, when we talk about wisdom being the most appropriate and effective means to that end, first of all, Scripture helps us there immensely.

Scripture gives us laws and boundaries and proverbs for finding the proper means. God's word teaches us humility so that even when we are absolutely confident, rock solid in our proper end, we're teachable about how to get there.

We're not stuck on something that's foolish. We're willing to listen. We know that our knowledge of Scripture is incomplete. We've got a lot to learn about the means. We know that the knowledge of the people and circumstances in our life is incomplete.

[22 : 07] We might have to adjust the way that we live based on our culture, based on the people around us. We might have to adjust the way we make decisions. We've got a lot to learn from God's word. We have much to learn from wise people in the church here at Squamish Baptist Church, other wise believers that we encounter, the wise believers of the past who've written down words for our instruction, for our help.

We even have much to learn from wise people who aren't believers, who have expertise in a particular matter that we're facing. They may not have the right ends, but maybe they have wisdom in the means.

You know, I think of an example of that in terms of the way that we run a well-ordered church business meeting. Suppose you're supposed to run the business meeting, and you just don't know what to do.

You don't know how to run it, so things don't spiral horribly out of control. Right? Because that's a thing that happens here. Thankfully, no. But we're governed by, so how Scripture helps us is Scripture gives us commands for order in 1 Corinthians and Colossians and Titus, that there's a need for a well-ordered church.

Right? But it doesn't tell you exactly how to run a business meeting. So what do you do? You crack open Robert's Rules of Order, a source of secular wisdom.

[23 : 28] It's helpful. In our culture. Maybe not so much in other cultures, but sure is in ours. For the wisdom of leading a God-honoring marriage, a husband is governed and directed by scriptural commands to cherish his wife, to live with his wife in an understanding way, in Ephesians and 1 Peter.

Now, it doesn't necessarily give a ton of specifics on how to do that. That's going to look different in different cultures and different places. In our culture, I've found, you know, some of the wisdom from, for example, the Gottman Institute to be helpful to fulfilling that biblical means.

That wisdom can also, unfortunately, those means can be put towards evil ends. The Gottmans are perfectly happy to use their secular wisdom to help you out in your sinful sexual relationships.

And Robert's Rules of Order can be used to run a really effective Ku Klux Klan meeting. The world can offer helpful means, but those means must be governed by scripture.

And the ends must come from God's word. So when it comes to the wisdom of knowing the most appropriate and effective means, God's word supplies, governs, directs our search for wisdom.

[24 : 46] And so therefore, all of you are able to counsel. The wise church is a counseling church. So given the fact that every believer who has been given the Holy Spirit, who's been given God's word, every believer who's been given his church, whom the Holy Spirit works through, given the fact that every believer is therefore able to become a wise and good counselor, well, then we ask the question, who should be counseling?

Who should be out there counseling? The answer from God's word will not surprise you. Who should counsel? All of you. It's not just that you're capable of it. You should be doing it. Paul writes in Colossians 3, verse 16, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

So as the message of the gospel, the word of Christ, as it dwells in you, as you soak in it, marinate on it, as it sinks into your bones, as you meditate on it, you become empowered as time goes on. Every one of you is empowered and all of you are commanded to teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. This is a commandment. This isn't optional.

This is not an option for the Christian life. I'm not looking for volunteers. This is not a call for volunteers. You must do this if you are a Christian. And if the word of Christ is dwelling in you richly, this isn't a command that's a drudgery.

[26 : 26] This is a command that, man, you're just driven. You're compelled to do it. You want to do it. You want to be a counselor. We're all commanded to counsel one another.

First of all, we see here, with wisdom, we need to become wise. And then second of all, scripture commands us all to counsel one another with, and this is very important, with gentleness.

I have to say that because there are some of us who maybe are not so eager to be counselors and you need to be prodded. You need God's word to say, hey, you need to become a counselor, a wise counselor.

But then some of us are all too eager to be counselors. You're more than ready to get into other people's lives and tell them what to do. You're more than ready.

I see somebody who's sinning. I see somebody who's living foolishly. And boy, have I got the thing to say to them. Guess how that's going to be received. When you come at someone with a wrecking ball, they're going to put up their defenses.

[27 : 31] Sometimes we do that. We're eager to just, here's a Bible verse, throw it at you, start doing it. We need to be reminded of the many commandments in scripture that tell us about the manner in which we counsel.

In James chapter 3, here's what we read. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

Does that describe the way that you approach and you confront someone who is behaving foolishly or sinfully? Pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

Sometimes the reason we're so harsh in counseling is because we aren't trusting God, the Holy Spirit, to be the chief counselor. We think I've got to come in with my powerful words to change a person.

It's possible to err in failing to counsel one another. It's possible to err in counseling one another with foolishness.

[28 : 44] And it's also possible to err in counseling one another in a harsh or impatient or tone deaf manner. And God's word tells us that different people need to be approached differently.

1 Thessalonians chapter 5, we're told, we urge you brothers, now notice the three categories here, admonish the idle, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

So some people, they need you to get up in their grill. The idle needs to really be admonished. The idle and unruly. Some people really need to be encouraged. They need your encouragement. And some people just need help. But with all of them, you be patient. You trust God, the Holy Spirit, to work.

And so in this manner, with wisdom and with gentleness, you all should counsel. The wise church is a counseling church. So we know who should be counseling, but who should receive counseling? [29 : 53] Who should receive counseling? Well, that question is answered by Colossians 1, verse 28. And here Paul is talking about the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

And here's what he says. Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

Notice there's a word in there that gets repeated three times. Everyone, everyone, everyone. Who in the church ought to become mature in Christ? Everyone, all of you. Therefore, who needs to be warned and taught with all wisdom?

Everyone, all of you. So who should receive counseling? Everyone, all of you. That's right. If you are a Christian, you need counseling.

If you are a Christian, you need counseling. In fact, if you're a Christian, then you ought to be eager for counseling. I had a friend of mine who was on staff at a church with me years ago.

[30 : 57] A fellow staff member of ours needed to be trained in counseling. And so he needed some hours to put in. He needed someone to counsel. And so my other friend eagerly volunteered to receive marriage counseling.

Now, you look at his marriage and you think, why? He and his wife have a healthy marriage. They seem to do well. In fact, they're exemplary in our church. But my friend, he and his wife said, we could always use some marriage counseling.

We could always use some. Because he had the humility that comes with wisdom. The humility of a disciple in Christ who wants to be mature. who is eager to press onward to maturity.

He says, our marriage is good, but it could be better. So we'll open it up. He had the humility that we are urged to possess in Proverbs chapter 1. To know wisdom and instruction.

To understand words of insight. To receive instruction in wise dealing and righteousness, justice, and equity. To give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth.

[32 : 10] Let the wise hear and increase in learning and the one who understands obtain guidance to understand a proverb and a saying, the words of the wise and their riddles.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

I know I said I was going to be gentle. So here's where I'm going to try to be gentle and also say something that might be hard to hear.

Fools are the ones who think they don't need counseling. That's what Solomon says. That's what the Holy Spirit is saying. I hope you don't think you're wiser than God.

There's some of you sitting here who look good on the outside. You're doing your best to hold it all together. Frankly, you've got a lot of people fooled. Your lifestyle, your marriage, maybe they're even Instagram worthy.

[33 : 14] I don't know, Insta worthy, is that a word? But, it is now, thank you. But, you know that everything is rotting away underneath that lovely veneer.

You know that things are not good. You know that things have been bad for a while. you know wise believers that you could talk to about it. And, you know that there's an open invitation at our church to receive biblical counseling.

I mean, it's right there in our communication cards in your bulletin. You're not going to do it, though. Not until it's too late. The reason you won't do this according to the Holy Spirit is because you're foolish.

It's because you're foolish. You're acting like a fool. Those are his words, not mine. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. You need help. Don't wait another week to get it.

Don't be that guy who refuses to go to the doctor until gangrene has eaten away half of his body. God has given you the resources and the relationships you need and he's given them to you now.

[34 : 23] When is there going to be a better time? Get help now. So who should receive counseling? All of you. A wise church is a counseling church.

It's a church made up of people who seek counseling. So let's say that this week everybody here is like, man, you know what? God is right. The Holy Spirit's right.

I need counseling. And everybody here, he's this call to seek wisdom and counseling. So, maybe you're thinking how in the world can the church handle all of that counseling that we are badly needing?

How do we counsel one another well? In short, how do we become a wise church? How do we become a wise church? A church full of people who are wise, who are counselors.

Here's the game plan moving forward at Squamish Baptist Church. As elders, we're going to work at developing a hierarchy of counseling.

[35 : 22] Last year, in Exodus chapter 18, we saw the story of Moses who was trying to judge all the different cases and disputes and conflicts in the people of Israel. And his father, Jethro, saw him wearing himself out, running himself ragged trying to do it.

And he advised Moses that he should really only handle the most difficult cases. And he should set up a hierarchy of leaders under him who can handle the less difficult cases and only bring to him the most difficult ones.

We need that too. We need that too. Within the church, there are those who are in authority as elders. Elders are meant to handle the more difficult cases. In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, Paul writes, we ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.

That's the same word, that admonishing, counseling. We've already seen that all believers are meant to admonish one another, but elders in particular are called to admonish.

They have a particular responsibility. As elders in the church, we're going to become men who can counsel. Occasionally, we're going to encounter cases that require a lot of specialized expertise that we might not have.

[36 : 42] Cases like that, we can get help from outside counselors. I find that most problems, though, most counseling cases are things that, you know, if they were caught early, they could be corrected by wise believers.

A lot of people wait until their marriage is completely off the rails before they get counseling. If they had gotten help two years prior, things would have gone a lot better. If we plan to ensure that, so we plan to ensure that our growth group leaders, people that you know and look up to, they can be equipped with basic counseling skills to help handle the less difficult cases and then to hand over the more difficult cases to our pastoral staff and to our elders.

Furthermore, we want to make sure that counseling training is available to all believers. We're going to highlight training opportunities. An example is the recent relationships conference at Westside Church in Vancouver that was hosted last month.

That was really helpful for singleness, for marriage and frankly, 90% of what was said there was valuable for pretty much every relationship in your life. What a great opportunity to learn wisdom. What a great opportunity to be counseled and to be given the resources to counsel others.

Our journey class is going to continue. We're going to continue featuring material like the book we're studying, this book called You Can Change by Tim Chester. You realize that we've, in so doing, what we've done is hand out a book that is training you how to counsel.

[38 : 13] It's training you how to begin counseling yourself and therefore how to begin counseling others. Finally, whenever I have the opportunity to counsel someone, I'm going to make an effort to include a third party, to include one of you in that counseling session as an advocate, someone to come alongside the person being counseled, to listen, to be an ally and an encourager for them throughout their week, throughout their life.

And then, who in turn can listen and learn how to approach our problems wisely. These are just all different ways. We're just beginning to take first steps to learn how we can become a wise church. So think about what this would be like. I want you to get a vision, to get an idea of what this would look like in practice. What would it be like if Squamish Baptist Church gained a reputation in our town for being a wise church?

What if you were to be in line at Starbucks and somehow you talked with someone in line in front of you and it came up that you were from Squamish Baptist Church and this is a local person and they were to respond, wow, I've heard a lot of good things about how wise the people at your church are. What if we became the kind of people that your friends, your neighbors, your coworkers, you were the one they turned to when their marriages are falling apart, when their children are rebelling,

when they're suffering and in pain, when they're struggling with anxiety and depression, when they're in a financial mess?

[39 : 53] What if you were the one? One of the best ways that we can shine as a light in a dark world, one of the best ways that we have of drawing people to Jesus Christ is by learning the wisdom of Jesus Christ.

That is what Paul envisioned when he wrote in Colossians chapter 4. Walk in wisdom, walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

Making the best use of the time, you're knowing the most appropriate and effective means to honor Christ. Let your speech always be gracious, that's the gentleness, seasoned with salt so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

As you walk in wisdom, those outside the church will come to you, those who long for wisdom. Our culture may deny that there is one wisdom, but people are still hungry for it.

And if you answer them graciously, the Holy Spirit may win them over to seek the best and noblest end at which to aim, to believe in Jesus Christ, to put their faith in him, to abandon their own righteousness, trusting in their own righteousness, to rely on his righteousness, his death and his resurrection on their behalf, to long to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

[41 : 23] So the wise church is a counseling church. The wise church is a counseling church. It's a church that exalts Jesus as king, that equips his followers for ministry and engages the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's who we ought to be. Our God, our Father, we are not adequate for this task. the housing Jinx thee one of his blessings in his role and the Son of a Christian and the poor that wants to be the last and the word that helps so we can talk