

Wisdom (vs. Foolishness)

Making practical application of what is learned.

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Checkmate!

By Jill Welte Tomey

When I was a little girl, I wanted to know how to play checkers with the fancy pieces. You know the ones – the horse and the castle and those other ones. My big brother explained that they were for a game called Chess and he showed me how to play. I was fascinated by the game and taught my little neighborhood friends. We were only about 7 or 8 so our understanding was just the basics.

One day, I had the board set up on the front porch as I was expecting a friend to show up. Our insurance man had come to the house, and when he saw the board set up he asked if I played. I surprised him by saying yes so, he sat down opposite me. It didn't take him too long to beat me. After he won, he asked me if I was used to winning. I replied that I was. He then told me if I wanted to really learn the game I had to get as much as experience as I could by playing often and with people who could beat me so I could learn from them. He then showed me the mistake I had made 3 moves back that let him capture my king. My first taste of strategy.

It was also my first taste of wisdom. Wisdom is more than knowledge as it requires experience to know how to use the knowledge you have. Just like in chess, I knew all the rules but it took experiencing many games to understand how to use those rules. My losses were just as illuminating as my wins if I took the time to review and learn from them.

I could also learn from watching other's chess games. Wisdom, too, can be gained by observing others and learning from their successes and failures. Heart to heart conversations with people who share your values can often be sources of wisdom.

In a chess game, you are always planning out many moves in advance. In the game of life, wisdom gives you the ability to understand what actions should end with success and what might fail. It uses your experiences, both good and bad, to help you make better decisions.

Exercising wisdom is no easy task. It requires being in touch with your values, your foundation. It requires knowing what your goals are and where you are headed. Wisdom is the slight pause before acting and speaking, where you join those values and goals with your knowledge and experience to make the next best decision.

This month, pause and use your wisdom to plan your next move.

How to Practice Wisdom:

- Seek out mentors who share my values
- Learn from correction
- Choose my friends and associates carefully
- Remember there are consequences to all my actions
- Ask, "What is the right thing to do?"

"Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living; the other helps you make a life." - Sandra Carey

"Wise men make more opportunities than they find." - Francis Bacon