Pay Attention to Voices of Wisdom

Maybe there's someone around you who has advice that'll help you get to where you want to be. In this case, for Rehoboam, it was a united kingdom - but he didn't want to listen. So you know what he did? He did what we do. He found some folks who would tell him what he wanted to hear. Let me tell you how to become your own worst enemy. Surround yourself with people who will tell you what you want to hear. If you want to blow up your family, your finances, your future… it's very simple - just surround yourself with people who will only tell you what you want to hear. And in Rehoboam's case, people who need you or even work for you. You'll lose influence, lose opportunity, lose respect, lose resources. That's how you end up where you don't want to be.

Let me ask you a kind of personal question, and then we'll go on with the story. And this isn't for all of us, but this may be the point in the message where you think somebody emailed me and told me your story. Don't worry, they didn't. Here it is: **Whose advice are you currently ignoring?** It may be bad advice, and you may need to ignore it. But just for a moment: Whose advice are you currently ignoring? And here's the real kicker. If there's something in you that says: *'What could they possibly know?'* - you need to hit pause because you're about to become the victim of a genetic fallacy.

OK - back to the story. ***But Rehoboam rejected the advice that the elders gave him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him.*** Young men with no more insight or life experience than he had. Young men who *worked* for him. Again, as I said earlier, when the only people who have access to you are people who need you or want something from you, you're in a dangerous place. That's why we all have to be proactive to bring people into our sphere of influence from the outside. You can always find people to tell you what you want to hear and confirm what you want to do.

But here's the deal: **'The problem with always doing what you want to do, is you eventually arrive at precisely where you don't want to be.'** If you only do what you want to do… in your marriage, with your finances, in your profession, academically, spiritually, relationally, you'll arrive exactly where you don't want to be. You'll become your own worst enemy, which is exactly what happened to Rehoboam. In fact, if you had never heard this story before, you could guess where this is going when he rejects the elders' advice, those who had been there and done that, right? It's easy to see from the outside, isn't it?

In fact, when you look at some of your friends and family members, you know how their story is going to end. But the challenge for you and me is to look in the mirror and ask ourselves the question: *Have we fallen into this rut?* A rut that if it's not taking its toll now, it will later. So the young men who had grown up with him, replied: ***'These people have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us but make our yoke lighter.' Now tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist.'*** So Solomon was a big guy, and in that culture, being big was a sign of health and wealth because most people lived on the verge of starvation. Back then, if you met a really overweight person, that person was considered healthy and wealthy. So apparently Solomon was *really* healthy. They said: *'You think my father's waist was big? My little finger is bigger than my father's waist.'* In other words, you ain't seen nothing yet.

And they didn't stop there. They went on to say… *You tell them:* ***'My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I'll scourge you with scorpions.'*** A scorpion was the type of whip you used to punish a criminal, not whip a slave. In other words, the message was this: *'My father treated you like slaves, I'm gonna treat you like criminals.'* So sure enough, he goes back 3 days later and all the people returned to Rehoboam. And Jeroboam is present, by the way. He's already risen up as the spokesperson, the leader. And we read: ***"The king answered the people harshly, rejecting the advice given him by the elders…"*** And the moment he rejected the elders advice, his fate was sealed, and so was the fate of the nation - because a series of unwise decisions led to a catastrophic decision that would impact tens of thousands of people.

Here's what he said - he basically repeated what the young men told him: ***'My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it heavier. My father scourged you with whips, I will scourge you with scorpions.'*** And then it says: ***When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king. 'What share do we have in David? What part in Jesse's son?'*** Jesse was David's father. ***'To your tents Israel! Look after your own house, David.!'*** David is a reference to the lineage that ran from David to Solomon to Rehoboam. So they were saying: *'Go build your own blankety blank cities and palaces. We don't recognize your right to rule over us. Go rule yourself.'* They threw up their hands and said: *'You're not gonna be our king.'* And then they went home. Now Rehoboam doesn't even believe this is real. He tells his advisors: *'Just give them a few days. It's all gonna work out. The kingdom isn't gonna split up.'* And then King Rehoboam made another **terrible** decision. He sent out Adoniram, who he put in charge of forced labor, but all of Israel just stoned him to death. *'We're not working for you. You didn't listen to us. You had an opportunity to rule a united kingdom, but it had to be all about you. You wouldn't listen to the wise counsel, because after all: What do a bunch of old men know?'* And the Bible says: ***"so Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day."*** 10 tribes of Israel in rebellion against the house of David, and the kingdom never came back together. It was divided - and when it was divided, it was weakened and became invadable… just like me, just like you, when we refuse to pay attention to the voices of wisdom around us.

So here's the take away: **Find someone who has nothing to gain and nothing to lose by telling you the truth.** And ask them: **'What would you do if you were in my shoes?'** I know you've never walked in my shoes, but you seem like a wise person… **What would you do if you were in my shoes?** It's so simple. You know this is the right approach. The question is: *Why don't we?* Well there are several reasons. One is: **we already know what they're gonna say**. Don't we? If you already know what a wise person is going say, then you already know what to do. So just do it.

Another reason is, sometimes: **we don't think it's anybody's business**. It's nobody else's business. And please don't miss this… it may *not* be any of their business. You're inviting them into your business and here's why... because **private decisions have public consequences.** Private decisions often don't stay private, do they? Wise people make it somebody else's business for the sake of their future - and for the sake of the future of the people you love, the people around you.

I want to challenge you to make a commitment, and this is a habit that'll serve you well. **I will not automatically discount advice based on the source of the advice.** Now obviously, there's advice we should all discount. But avoid that quick reaction, like: *'What do they know? They're too old. They're too young. It's a guy. How could a guy possibly... It's a woman, how could a woman possibly... They've never run a company like this.'* **Whose advice are you currently ignoring? I will not automatically discount advice based on the source of the advice.** Pay attention to the voices of wisdom around you, because **wise voices set you up for wise choices.**