

79.3 Use Your Head (Or, Act don't React)

Several years ago, **John Maxwell** told the story of **Bobby Jones**, a legendary golfer who won a major tournament at twenty-one. By age twenty-eight, Jones had already won the grand slam and retired. Jones's uncle said that by the time Bobby was fourteen, he was probably already the best golfer in the world and was undoubtedly popular with the fans. However, he had a spiritual issue. Jones was also known for his temper because he threw his clubs when upset with his game. Jones's uncle sat down with him and said, "Bobby, your problem is you've mastered the game of golf, but you haven't mastered your emotions; and until you master your emotions, you'll never be a champion in golf."

Maxwell observed: "*We have choices when it comes to our emotions: we can master them, or they can master us.*" ¹

We are in a spiritual war and must consider our spirits as we engage in it. Jesus gives us a two-fold instruction, as He said in **Matthew 10:16** (NKJV)

¹⁶“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

The word “harmless” could be translated as pure or innocent as in the ESV’s translation. Today, I want to focus on the wisdom emphasis of this verse.

Let’s begin by thinking about Jesus’ use of the harmless doves. Consider some characteristics of these birds.² First, doves are pure and clean animals according to the Torah (**Leviticus 1:14-17; 12:8**). These birds are not carnivorous scavengers like the ravens or vultures. Second, they are gentle. The anatomical study of the dove reveals that it has no gall, the source of a contentious and bitter spirit. The gentleness of the dove reminds us of the fruit of the Spirit. Third, doves have a sense of family and community. They are monogamous during mating season, and many repeat mating seasons together; Males and females work together to build and reuse nests; both take turns sitting on eggs. Fourth, the doves are agile and fast. Predators have difficulty catching them as they can reach a fantastic speed of 55 miles per hour in full flight.

He also tells us to be as wise as serpents. The seraphim angels (as in **Isaiah 6**) are in the form of serpents or snakes in some manner, according to the word’s definition. The perceptive ones have stayed with and served God, but the fallen demonstrate evil wisdom in deceiving humankind. These monsters have used “*Tell-a-Vision*” programming to control our minds, which is addictive. Can you go for a day without TV? Can you think outside the box of what the media tells you or do you go along to get along?

The evil ones have duped us, controlling our dumbed-down education system. The overall level of education in America continues to plummet year after year. We have well-intentioned teachers, impressionable students, and millions of dollars for education, but our schools are failing because God is not in the equation.

Years ago, the people of New England understood the possible deception and designed education to outwit Satan. And it wasn’t an option in Puritan Massachusetts. In 1647, the Massachusetts legislature passed the **Old Deluder Satan Act**, which required selectmen to ensure parents educate their children. If parents refused to educate their children, the government would relocate them to more suitable homes. Guess what they used for their primary textbook? Yes, it was the Bible!

‘One chief project of that old deluder, Satan,’ the law read, was to “keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures.” The law required every town with more than 50 families to set up a reading school,

¹ Leadership Wired newsletter. Cited in PreachingNow Newsletter, August 6, 2002.

² Some info is taken from: Williams, Diana K. "Characteristics Of Doves.", Sciencing, 5 Apr. 2018, sciencing.com/characteristics-doves-8686274.html.

*known as dame schools. Towns with more than 100 families had to run a grammar school in addition to a reading school.*³

Dr. Benjamin Rush warned us of what we know firsthand. He said:

"By removing the Bible from schools we would be wasting so much time and money in punishing criminals and so little pains to prevent crime. Take the Bible out of our schools and there would be an explosion in crime."

We are to be both wise and innocent. That is challenging for us as we often learn wisdom through the experiences of our foolishness. Sometimes we gain insight by watching others make mistakes. We can also learn wisdom by asking God for it (**James 1:5; Proverbs 2:3-6**). He may grant it supernaturally or give it through study and trials. Once we understand, we use it for good and maintain purity and innocence.

When we gain a wise understanding, we can act rather than react in various situations. Wisdom enables us to choose our words and actions because we use our heads, not our emotions. Properly using this learning is critical to our service to God. In **Proverbs 1:7** (NKJV), Solomon said, **"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction."** He also said in **Proverbs 9:10** (NKJV), **"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility."**

On average, doves have a short lifespan of one and a half to five years. The reality is our lifespan is short as well. The Lord's half-brother said it like this in **James 4:14** (NKJV):

For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Since life is short, should we not make the most of it? Should we not live wisely instead of foolishly?

We can engage in this spiritual war wisely by letting God direct us through His word and His Spirit. **Romans 12:1-2** (NKJV) reminds us:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

We have a "reasonable" service to perform that happens when the renewing of our minds with God transforms us. As situations arise, we can think and act blamelessly in compelling wisdom rather than in the highly emotional state many find themselves in today. Have you noticed how much yelling people do in times of disagreement? We are reacting rather than acting.

America entered WWII because of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. We are now engaged in an information/spiritual world war in which we need to realize the supernatural aspect behind the evil events of the day. So many people are unknowingly (or even intentionally) puppets of the "Puppet Master of Wickedness." Let's engage the battle with wisdom and purity and use our heads, not merely emotions.

Let's Keep The Light of Wisdom in the War Burning!

³ *CONNECTICUT* How The Old Deluder Satan Act Made Sure Puritan Children Got Educated, New England Historical Society, 2022, www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/old-deluder-satan-act-made-sure-puritan-children-got-educated/.