

Book Review: The Little Red Book of Wisdom

By Carrie Cavanaugh

What in the world qualifies me to write a book about wisdom? From the beginning, let me state clearly that wisdom is a journey and not a destination. On my journey – ahead of some, behind others – I have no illusions about having arrived. Wisdom generally is associated with gray hair, and though some gray is sprinkling in, I am a relatively young man with much to learn.

So Mark DeMoss begins his book The Little Red Book of Wisdom. Yet, his modesty only validates his wisdom since (as one of the chapter titles teaches) a wise man should “under-promise, over-deliver”. This Mark does despite the fact that he has many responsibilities. He is a husband and father of three as well as the founder and president of The DeMoss Group, a public relations firm. Despite these and numerous other things that claim his time, Mark made a point to write this challenging, inspiring and insightful collection of wisdom. In fact, as you read the book, it becomes clear that all of those responsibilities lent themselves to the book as they gave him the life experiences he recounts as illustration.

With short, but meaningful, chapters, The Little Red Book of Wisdom is easy to read. That being said, it is not the sort of book you should read straight through. Rather it should be chewed slowly so that it can be internalized. Also, this is a good book to read over again on a regular basis as its pages are filled with good reminders we cannot afford to forget. These reminders include the idea that life on this earth is brief, integrity is key, benefit comes of spending time with people older than yourself and how to avoid regrets to name a few.

Although there is overlap, the book is divided into two sections: “Wisdom for Your Professional Life” and “Wisdom for Your Personal Life.” Each chapter is comprised of a profound introductory quote, an introduction to the topic, personal illustrations and a convincing argument. I was impressed by the way DeMoss’ faith was the foundation for much of the book and yet he presented each bit of wisdom in a manner so unassuming that anyone, Christian or Non-Christian, could enjoy.

Is there need for this book of Wisdom? DeMoss addresses this issue in his book. He recognizes that nothing can compare with the true source of wisdom, God, and affirms “I am not the source of wisdom and never will be.” Rather, he offers his “observations on wisdom” hoping that some “reader [will] glean an insight or two and appl[y] it to more skillful living.” I, for one, have gleaned an insight or two – that relationships are what is of eternal worth, books are the things that change us, you can win someone’s ear by being a good listener. Rather than adding anything new on the subject of wisdom, DeMoss’ book is more of an explication and application of many of the lessons presented in the Bible.



One memorable story from the book is of an organization that invited a prominent international figure to come and give them counsel. When he arrived he was treated with great honor, but never given a chance to speak since the president of the organization used all the time to convey his own ideas. The guest's car pulled out of the parking lot, the counsel never given. Indeed wisdom is knowing when to listen to others!

This book is an example of a time to listen. It is too seldom that we get to know people of personal and professional integrity who fear God and have been successful in the living of their lives, but Mark DeMoss has given us just that opportunity; The Little Red Book of Wisdom gives us a glimpse at the values that govern his life and we would be foolish not to listen.