

Proverbs 8:1-36

Falling back into the flow; if you remember right, Ch 7 was a rather steamy scene. A young man (devoid of understanding) *flirting w/temptation* rather than *fleeing from* temptation; as the sun was going *down* he was headed *out* into an area of town he ought not to have been. **The result was that a woman of ill intent caught him, enticed him & ensnared him. Like an ox thinking it's headed for green pastures when in reality it's being taken to the slaughter he followed her home & in the end it cost his life.**

Ch 8 creates contrast. Another woman crying out, not in the night, not in shady areas; out in the open, reaching out to as many people as she possibly can, not to lure them astray, but to lead them in the way that they should go; Lady wisdom. She's not out to entice the fool down the path of folly, but to take us & train us in nobility, fidelity, & integrity.

Vs 1-3

So the seductress went out in the night, under the cover of darkness secretly, changing her attire so as to act deceitfully. But wisdom's ways are open & honest. She has nothing to hide, on the contrary she wants as many people to see her, hear her & come to her as possible. She "cries out", "lifts up her voice", not in the shady places under the cover of night. She takes her stand, "on top of the high hill" for all to see, she's "beside the way, where paths meet" in highly public arenas, she's "by the gates, at the entry of the city" where people are making important decisions. She's availing herself, making herself accessible to anyone & everyone who will humble themselves & seek her out.

She's not confined to some academic classroom, some sacred precinct, she's seeking to attract & be accessible to anyone who will respond to her call... It's reminiscent of the fact that God is not willing/wanting that *anyone* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance. So the call goes out.

But one of the keys to attaining to wisdom is to what? Hear & respond to its cry (it's call). Someone has said that many people might have attained wisdom had they not assumed they already had it. If you are & I am to be made wise it's absolutely imperative that we have what? A teachable spirit... There's a lot of people who think they've already got it all together, that they know what they need to know, consequently they do foolish

things out of arrogant pride. But Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*"¹

It's not the one who sits back thinking he/she knows it all, or even the one who perhaps sees the significance but really has no heart or no passion to pursue it. Jesus says that if you want to grow, you want to increase in wisdom/righteousness, there needs to be a hunger, a thirst to be taught, to be instructed, to be guided in/by God's word. That person will grow; God will honor the passion, the position of that heart.

Vs 4-5

Notice the call goes out to fools & those who are simple, but not to those who scorn. Those who scorn, mock & turn away from the message. Their heart is hardened to the message; which is one of the dangers of hearing the message but not responding *to* the message. Our heart can grow callused, desensitized to the word of God. **That's one reason we're told in Hebrews 4, "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart." & Again in Ch 12, "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks." We can come to the place where rather than receive it, we find easy to reject it & scorn/mock the message (& in essence wisdom w/draws it's invitation from us).**

You see as to where the adulterous in Ch 7 sought to take advantage of the simple & naïve; wisdom seeks to equip & arm the simple & naïve. Wisdom *urges* the simple to understand prudence. What is "prudence"? **The dictionary defines it, "...the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason, shrewdness in the management of affairs, skill and good judgment in the use of resources, caution or circumspection as to danger or risk."** It's an invitation unto insight & understanding. Jesus taught us to be as harmless as doves but *wise* as serpents. Gentle but sharp.

Vs 6-9

Here we're seeing the attributes of wisdom (both to the positive & to the negative). But take note again of the exhortation to "Listen", to pay attention to what's going on here, we need to recognize the fingerprints of wisdom in a given situation.

To the positive we're told that wisdom speaks "excellent things", "right things" & "truth". Vs 8 tells us that *all* (that word is categorical in nature), "*all* the words of my mouth are *w/righteousness.*" Not some of them or most of them, *all* of them.

To the negative we read, "Wickedness is an *abomination* to my lips."

¹ The New King James Version. (1982). (Mt 5:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

² The New King James Version. (1982). (Eph 4:29). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& Again in Vs 8, “*Nothing* (another categorical word) crooked or perverse is in them.” “They are all *plain* to him who understands & right to those who find knowledge.” Or another way to understand those things; wisdom has nothing to hide; there’s no hidden agenda underneath her words.

When we read that wisdom’s words are “right” (in Vs 6 & 9) the idea is that of being “straight”, direct & correct. The opposite of the “crooked & perverse” words we read of in Vs 8. The bible has a lot to say, not only about the quantity of our speech (how much we talk) but also about the *quality* of our speech. Paul told the Ephesians, “*Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.*”² In Colossians we read, “*But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,*”³ & Again, “*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.*”⁴

You’ll recognize wisdom in that it’s pure, it’s edifying & encouraging. It’s a right word in due season. It may not always be the word we *want*, but it’ll always be the word we *need*. It won’t be negative, it won’t be profane, it won’t be cynical or critical. “All the words of my mouth are w/righteousness.”

“For my mouth will speak *truth*.” People will occasionally talk about errors in the bible. It’s ok to say that there are things in God’s word that we don’t understand. But what needs to be made clear is that the problem isn’t in the bible, it’s in the heart & mind of man. The word of God is true, it’s direct, & it’s correct. Where there’s a problem, it’s not w/God’s word; it’s w/my heart, or my mind.

So we need to submit ourselves to wisdom; it’s right & it’s valuable. Notice.

Vs 10-13

The exhortation of Vs 10-11 is to understand that the value of wisdom far exceeds any material wealth that this world has to offer. It offers eternal riches, the rewards that follow you into eternity as opposed to perishing w/this world.

We see again in Vs 12 that wisdom & prudence are like “hand in glove”, they’re a package deal. If you have one you have the other.

² The New King James Version. (1982). [Eph 4:29]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ The New King James Version. (1982). [Col 3:8-9]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ The New King James Version. (1982). [Col 4:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Knowledge & discretion are along for the ride as well (couple of bonus items thrown in on the deal ☺). What is discretion? We're talking here about careful behavior that arises out of clear thinking. Wisdom teaches us how to think rightly & live carefully.

Now look at Vs 13. "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." In other words, a right relationship w/the Lord recognizes there can be no fellowship between light & darkness. We have to be able to call a spade & spade. Paul told the Romans, "*The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*"⁵ The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. We're to cast off the works of darkness & put on the armor of light.

"Pride & arrogance & the evil way & the perverse mouth I hate." We're to walk in humility, lead our lives according teaching of the Word of God & speak the things necessary for edification. These things are the net effect of "wisdom" working in & through our lives; leading us in the way that we should go.

Vs 14-16

Again wisdom makes it's appeal, "Counsel is mine... I am understanding, I have strength." These are things we need! Wisdom enables kings to reign & rulers to decree justice. It's by wisdom that princes rule & nobles & all the judges of the earth! Now this doesn't mean that everyone in a position of power has wisdom. But those who rule well do so by the wisdom God gives them.

History; both biblical & secular demonstrate that there have been (& are) many in positions of power that don't operate under God's wisdom. The ramifications of which takes it's toll upon nations.

Vs 17-21

Let me say here that though material wealth can come with wisdom. That's not the indicative mark of wisdom upon a person's life. There are many who've abounded in wisdom who were never rich materially, conversely there have been many wealthy materially who were not wise at all...

Solomon just made it emphatically clear here that the net effect of wisdom in a man's life is "better" than fine gold, than choice silver. In Vs 10-11 he says that wisdom is to be desired more than silver & it's better than rubies. This is the guy who upon his request for wisdom, God said that He was going to give him both wisdom & riches.

⁵ The New King James Version. (1982). [Ro 13:12]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

So he's speaking from a position of authority as a man who had both. & Again we note here that the only real prerequisite for acquiring it is an *earnest desire*. He says, "I love those who love me & those who seek me *diligently will find me.*"

"I love those who love me." This reminded me of, "*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*" *James 4:8* There's a mutual attraction there; wisdom loves to pour herself into those who love wisdom. She's attracted to those who long for her. We read, "...those who seek me *diligently will find me.*" Again it made me think of *Jeremiah 29:13*, "*And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*" Those who seek me "diligently", "unrelentingly" will find me. Jesus reiterated this same principle when He said, "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*"⁶

Vs 22-26

Question; if *God* employed wisdom & recognized the benefits of it in all that He would do in the creation of our universe; how much more should we seek after & employ wisdom in the decisions & choices that we make?

Notice in Vs 23 that wisdom has been established from everlasting, before there ever was an earth... Have you ever wondered what existed before there ever was an earth? I don't know. Certainly God was ever present in heaven, the angels & whatever heavenly creations were there. Were there various dimensions? We don't know, the bible doesn't say. But before the earth was ever created, wisdom was in place & at God's disposal.

Vs27-31

Check out Vs 27, we read that God, "drew a circle" on the face of the deep. For ages, science operated from the premise that they thought the earth was square; but the word of God has always declared it's a circle. We live on a round world, that goes in a circle & our planetary system moves in a circle. It's one circle, being circled by another circle 😊. What do you know, God's word was right again...

I don't know how many of you have ever been to the ocean, but if you've ever stood on the sea shore & wondered why it is that the ocean just stops there. Why it doesn't rage over the beachhead & flood everything; now you know. Vs 29 tells us that through wisdom, God "...assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command." God's word holds it there, pretty cool huh? 😊

⁶ The New King James Version. (1982). [Mt 6:33]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

& One of the lessons that we can take from this section is that the same power & splendor of God that's so readily seen in the "old creation" which evidences God's wisdom in what He can do & has done; even as He through wisdom worked in the "old creation" even so He wants to work (through wisdom) in the lives of His "new creation" that is, your life & mine. He wants to display His power & splendor through you & me as He works in wisdom through our lives.

Now because wisdom is seen here as a "master craftsman", beside the Lord, being used by the Lord; some have thought that it's actually inferring J.C. Of course the bible says, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."*⁷ & Again, *"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—"*⁸

& Because Christ embodies wisdom, certainly there is application that can be drawn from what we read of wisdom & the life/works of Christ. Having said that, we should realize that it's just that. We don't really have justification for suggesting that wisdom here is a reference to Christ. Though application abounds, the interpretation is more properly seen as a personification of the attribute of wisdom that God (the Word) employed in creation.

Vs 32-36

Proverbs 8 closes w/another urgent appeal to see the value in wisdom & seek after it diligently. Vs 32, "Listen to me", "keep my ways". Vs 33, "Hear instruction". Vs 34, "Blessed is the man who *listens to me*", "Watching *daily* at my gates", "Waiting at the posts of my doors" (Watching/waiting). There's an earnest desire here.

Vs 35, "For whoever finds me finds life & obtains favor from the Lord." Hey, I don't know about you, but I don't need to hear anymore. If in finding wisdom I find life & obtain *favor* from the Lord; that's more than enough to incite my desire; I want wisdom.

To reject wisdom is to invite death; is to wrong our own soul. We have a choice set before us, to desire wisdom is to find life. To reject its call is to invite death. The choice God's word sets before us is literally a matter of life & death.

Wisdom calls to us & exhorts us to turn from our sin & trust in J.C. to reject wisdom's call is to continue in sin; & the wages of sin... is death.

⁷ The New King James Version. (1982). [Jn 1:1-3]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁸ The New King James Version. (1982). [1 Co 1:30]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Prayer Points:

God we choose life, we long for wisdom; we want Your word at work *in* us, Your wisdom guiding & pouring through us. Give us ears to hear, that we might listen to You & receive instruction. We want an understanding heart; may our lives show forth Your glory. Help us to speak words that build up & not tear down, that edify & encourage rather than criticize & discourage. Have your way in us...