

The Proverbs

Lesson 8

Proverbs 8

Wisdom Calls – Understanding Lifts Her Voice

Proverbs 8:1 Does not wisdom call, And understanding lift up her voice? **2** On top of the heights beside the way, Where the paths meet, she takes her stand; **3** Beside the gates, at the opening to the city, At the entrance of the doors, she cries out:

Solomon personifies wisdom and understanding again in this chapter but with a greater emphasis than seen in his previous conversation with Rehoboam. From the mountaintops to the corners of the streets to the gates of the cities and to the doors of the homes, the king proclaims to his son that wisdom and understanding can be found everywhere as she calls with an uplifted voice. However, Solomon's use of these words offers Rehoboam a broader meaning. Throughout the history of Israel, the top of the heights were used as places of worship; wisdom and understanding could be found there. At the corners of the streets, people sold their products; wisdom and understanding could be found there. At the gates, the judges sat to settle disputes and notarize legal transaction; wisdom and understanding could be found there. At the entrances to the homes, families lived and gave birth to new generations; wisdom and understanding could be found there. Previously, Solomon has shown where places of worship were used as excuses by people to show their goodness in spite of their wickedness, the judgment at the gates were used to propagate evil, the corners of the streets were used to lure the naive away from godly paths and the entrances into the homes led the naive into acts of sin. Even so, wisdom and understanding can be found in all those places for all who will listen to her words.

Wisdom Speaks

Proverbs 8:4 "To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. **5** "O naive ones, discern prudence; and, O fools, discern wisdom.⁵⁶ **6** "Listen, for I shall speak noble things; and the opening of my lips *will produce* right things. **7** "For my mouth will utter truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. **8** "All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing crooked or perverted in them. **9** "They are all straightforward to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. **10** "Take my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choicest gold. **11** "For wisdom is better than jewels; and all desirable things can not compare with her.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ **Isaiah 32:6** For a fool speaks nonsense, And his heart inclines toward wickedness, To practice ungodliness and to speak error against the LORD, To keep the hungry person unsatisfied And to withhold drink from the thirsty.

⁵⁷ **Job 28:15** " Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price.

Psalm 119:127 Therefore I love Thy commandments Above gold, yes, above fine gold.

Psalm 19:10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

Here, wisdom identifies the difference among four classifications of people. When wisdom addresses the “O men”, she uses the Hebrew word *ishim* which means men of power, wealth and notoriety. When she says “to the sons of men”, it is the Hebrew *al beney Adam*, translated literally, “to all the descendants of Adam” and thus all humans. When she addresses the “O naive ones”, the Hebrew word is *pethaim* which means “the simple”, those who are easily deceived, deluded and drawn away by flattering words. When she addresses the “fools”, it is the Hebrew word *kesilim* and it means the stupid, senseless, stiff-necked people. The naive needs to hear her voice and learn how to detect prudence, better translated today as intelligence or common sense. The fools need to hear her voice and learn how to detect wisdom, better translated today as the faculty of insight.

Wisdom calls for all four classes of people to “Listen” or perk up their ears to hear truth without error. The truth will contain righteousness without any distortion. The truth will be plain, easy to understand by anyone at any level in any of the four classes. Further, nothing on this earth is as valuable as what wisdom is about to say.

Wisdom Dwells with Prudence

Proverbs 8:12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge *and* discretion.

Where does wisdom live? She lives with prudence which means intelligence. This intelligence might be better translated common sense. People who have common sense are often thought to be intelligent and thus considered wise, although they may not be at the top of the class in the formal educational system. Once wisdom begins to live with common sense, knowledge and discretion follow. The deeper she can ingrain herself in a man, the more practical common sense ensues.

Wisdom Hates Evil

Proverbs 8:13 "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, and the perverted mouth, I hate.

It is common sense that the person who worships the LORD will hate evil. But just as wisdom indwells a person, so, too, knowledge and discretion will quickly associate evil with pride, arrogance and the perverted mouth, all things that wisdom hates. The indwelling of wisdom will lead the person to do what is righteous in the sight of the LORD.

Wisdom Owns Counsel and Wisdom

Proverbs 8:14 "Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine.

What does counsel mean? In this passage, it means the ability to give direction to someone in how to act in any and every circumstance. Can the naive give counsel? No! Can the fool give counsel? No! True wisdom comes only from the LORD and she belongs to the one who allows her to live within him. Her wisdom is “sound” meaning she has substance. She works in the lives of those who allow her in to give them the power of understanding. That understanding is called knowledge and knowledge is power.

Wisdom Guides Righteous Rulers

Proverbs 8:15 "By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. **16** "By me princes rule, and nobles, All who judge rightly.

All righteous rulers govern under the guidance of wisdom. That is not to say that all rulers govern under her because the evil rulers of this world govern with deceit and lies. If your ruler is righteous he is guided by this same wisdom. If your ruler is wicked, he knows nothing of this wisdom and she does not live within him.

Wisdom Loves Those Who Love Her

Proverbs 8:17 "I love those who love me; and those who diligently seek me will find me.

Every person of every class can find wisdom if she is diligently sought. What does that mean? Sadly, this translation is not accurate; it should say, "those who diligently seek me early will find me." She is not talking about early in the day; she is speaking of early in life. Childhood and the teenage years are the best time to seek after wisdom and find her. Mistakes are avoided when she is found in the early years; lessons are learned properly the first time; the love of God is felt early when wisdom comes to "dwell with prudence." It is Solomon's charge to Rehoboam to embrace wisdom early in his life and she will love him the way he loves her. Yet, it is never too late to start embracing her; she will love you no matter how old you are when you begin to seek her diligently.

Wisdom Gives Enduring Wealth

Proverbs 8:18 " Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. **19** "My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, and my yield than choicest silver. **20** "I walk in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice, **21** to endow those who love me with wealth, that I may fill their treasuries.

Wisdom is not promising that the person she indwells will be wealthy in earthly terms with gold and silver, although from a practical observation, those who embrace this wisdom always have enough earthly wealth to meet their needs. Because wisdom ranks gold and silver far below what she has to offer, she is speaking of "enduring wealth and righteousness", meaning the riches of heaven placed within the souls of those who diligently seek her.

Wisdom Always Belonged to the LORD

Proverbs 8:22 "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. **23** "From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. **24** "When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. **25** " Before the mountains were settled, before the hills I was brought forth; **26** while He had not yet made the earth and the fields, nor the first dust of the world. **27** "When He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep, **28** When He made firm the skies above, when the springs of the deep became fixed, **29** When He set for the sea its boundary, so that the water should not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth; **30** Then I was beside Him, *as* a master workman; and I was daily *His* delight, rejoicing always before Him, **31** Rejoicing in the world, His earth, and *having* my delight in the sons of men.

In Genesis 1:1, Moses recorded that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Notice that the earth was created after heaven. In other words, the LORD created His home before He created ours. But, even before He created heaven, He created wisdom as indicated in the phrase “before His works of old.” Wisdom states that the LORD possessed her before He created any part of the earth. She further states that she was already there “When He established the heavens.” Therefore, no part of “His works of old” were created without wisdom being involved. It was a joy for wisdom to work with the LORD.

Wisdom Blesses Those Who Keep Her Ways

Proverbs 8:32 "Now therefore, *O* sons, listen to me, for blessed are they who keep my ways.

33 "Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect *it*. **34** "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts.

Once again, “O sons” should be translated “children of Adam.” These children are blessed when they diligently listen to wisdom and follow her instructions without neglect. In other words, those who have an intense desire to know and follow wisdom will be wise. To obtain her wisdom is a daily task and often the student must watch and wait for the next opportunity to gain her instruction.

Find Wisdom –Find Life and the LORD

Proverbs 8:35 "For he who finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD.

Wisdom promises life and the favor of the LORD for everyone who finds her. She is not speaking of life here on earth; she is speaking of eternal life with the LORD and that is the ultimate favor.

Hate Wisdom – Find Death

Proverbs 8:36 "But he who sins against me injures himself; all those who hate me love death."

Here, wisdom indicates that there are people who will sin against her. The person who sins against wisdom “injures himself”, meaning he has wronged his own soul. Sinning against wisdom means that she is hated by the person and that attitude has deadly consequences. The Apostle Paul explains the state of a person who hates wisdom when he says, “For the wages of sin is death.” What a tragic dichotomy in that the one who hates wisdom loves death, eternal death out of the presence of the LORD forever.