

Proverbs 1:8-33

Wisdom's Eternal Significance

Proverbs: Living Well in God's World

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Overview

Proverbs opens by making its purposes clear: to give wisdom and instruction to both the wise and the unwise. The unwise need wisdom; the wise need more. According to the book of Proverbs, wisdom is about living well in God's world. God made the world an ordered place. He made everything to work in a certain way. The wise person is one who learns to fit in with the way things work. The wise person sees reality clearly, and lives in a way that fits with it.

The foundational principle of wisdom is that it begins with God. This is what it means to fear the Lord. "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge*" (Prov. 1:7). This verse tells us where to start: We begin with God. We come to Christ, and we acknowledge that he is the center of the universe. We submit to him as the center of our lives. We see him as the source of wisdom. In other words, trusting Christ, with an open, reverent faith, is the beginning of wisdom. The wise life is the one that comes to Christ for wisdom.

That's the beginning of wisdom. Proverb 1:8-33 gives us three insights about wisdom.

1. Wisdom's Source (Where We Find It) v. 8-9

The **first source** is one's parents. Most of the first 9 chapters of proverbs are lectures from a father to a son who reinforces that parents are the source of wisdom for their children. The **second source** is underneath this. Verse 8 looks like it's just a conversation between one father and one son. But this is actually a way of introducing the whole book. Everyone who reads this is to put him or herself in the shoes of the son. The **third source** of wisdom is God's word. All true wisdom that comes from parents, that comes from the book of Proverbs, comes from God. And as we read the book of Proverbs, we're learning wisdom directly from God.

2. Wisdom's Perspective (A Vision for Life) v. 10-19

The father gives specific wisdom for a particular situation: when sinners would entice, do not consent. The father explains the real issue in verse 19, "*such are the ways of everyone who is greedy for unjust gain.*" It's seeking to benefit at someone else's expense. Because Proverbs isn't just about making us good; it's about making us wise. Unjust gain is a moral issue. But it's also a *wisdom* issue. In verses 17-18, we read, "*in vain is a net spread in the sight of any bird, but these men lie in wait for their own blood; they set an ambush for their own lives.*" These guys are ultimately setting their own trap. But they don't know that they are setting themselves up for their own ruin.

3. Wisdom's Stability (Why it Matters) v. 20-33

The rest of the chapter turns from the father to Woman wisdom. Wisdom is personified as a woman, crying out in the public square. Wisdom is coming to all of us, saying, "I'm available. Listen to me. I'm shouting. I'm here. You can have me."

First, she gives a **warning**: if you reject wisdom, your life will unravel. And when life unravels, it takes wisdom to get out of the mess you created, but you got there by rejecting wisdom in the first place. So, when you need wisdom, you won't have it. This is followed by a **promise** in verse 23, "*If you turn at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit to you; I will make my words known to you.*" When we turn, we open ourselves up to God's wisdom. We open ourselves up to Jesus. And he will pour out his spirit of wisdom.

Quotations

Cynthia Heimel lived in New York in the 1970s. She knew a lot of celebrities before they made it big. *"I pity celebrities. No I really do....Because that giant thing they were striving for, that something that was going to make everything okay, that was going to make their lives bearable, that was going to provide them with personal fulfillment and happiness, had happened. And they were still them. The disillusionment turned them howling and insufferable."*

"He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot

Understanding & Application

1. Reflect on "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge". What does this mean?
2. What have been the most prominent sources of wisdom in your life? How has the Word grown to become a significant source of wisdom for you?
3. Wisdom, personified as a woman crying in the public square, is largely ignored. How and why have you ignored her? What do you need to hear and heed in this season of your life?
4. We were reminded in the sermon that Jesus is the one to whom we look for wisdom. That we are to receive him not just as our savior and king, but our wise friend, who makes us wise. Who is someone you admire because they turn to Jesus for wisdom? How do they do this?
5. A test of our responsiveness to God's Word is what our posture and face communicates to others around you. The way we even sit during a sermon, small group setting, or in our family discussions or devotions, can be encouraging or discouraging to those around us. What does this bring to mind in being an encouragement to others?
6. Drew concluded with another test of our openness to God's Word. When was the last time you talked to someone about what you heard on Sunday from God's word or about what you've been reading or learning from the scriptures?