

The Home Builders

Week 2/Week 3

“My son (daughter), if you will receive my word and treasure my commandments within you, make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding; if you seek her (wisdom) as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God” (parenthesis mine).

Proverbs 2:1-5

We are combining our study on *wisdom* and *understanding*. Scripture often connects wisdom with understanding. In the Old Testament the word “wisdom” is closely related to the word “skill”. In the simplest term, wisdom is the skillful application of Biblical truth. The Biblical concept of understanding transcends gathering facts and finds its source in the person of God and in the Word of God. Biblical understanding is the ability to discern and gain clarity through the filter of God’s Word, turning information into revelation.

We will be looking at Proverbs 9 for our combined lesson on wisdom and understanding. In this proverb Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly, here personified as women, are contrasted.

1. The Invitation of Wisdom-Proverbs 9:1-8

“Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars” (Proverbs 9:1). Seven pillars indicate the grand scale of her home. In addition, the number “seven” in Scripture is often symbolic of perfection. Lady Wisdom had built a spacious home, prepared a fine banquet, mixed her wine, and set her table. It bears noticing how the description of the banquet mirrors the future Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9) when believers will dine with their Host, Jesus Christ.

Having prepared her banquet, Lady Wisdom sent out her maidens to invite everyone. In Bible times it was customary to issue two invitations. The first one, generally given some days in advance, gave all the particulars of the event. This would correspond to our “save the date” cards. The second one, given the day of the feast, was to get a head count of those who were able to attend. This would be similar to our RSVP request accompanying an invitation. Contrary to the culture, Lady Wisdom only offered one invitation. Everyone in the city was invited. The meal was free to anyone who wanted to eat at her table. The naive and those who lacked understanding were specifically sought after to receive Lady Wisdom’s invitation. She calls out, “Forsake your folly and live, and proceed in the way of understanding.” Accepting wisdom’s invitation required leaving the foolish crowd behind to pursue true wisdom and walk in “the way of understanding.” Proverbs 13:20 says, “He who walks with wise men will be wise; but the companion of fools will suffer harm.”

Lady Wisdom issued an invitation. Every detail has been attended to and everything was ready. The only thing lacking were the guests. She offered an open invitation, but one that required an immediate response.

2. **The Celebration of Wisdom-Proverbs 9:9-12**

Wisdom issued an invitation but each individual was required to respond in order to benefit from it. The simple and the scoffers seemed to be specifically targeted. Most, if not all, of that category refused Wisdom's invitation, possibly ridiculing her messengers.

While some refused, not all did. The wise men and women who attended the banquet of Wisdom were dramatically changed. Reverential awe and respect of God resulted along with knowledge of the Holy One coupled with understanding.

Lady Wisdom is still sending out an invitation for sinners to come to Jesus through repentance and faith (See Ephesians 2:3-9). The only way to know God's wisdom is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). First Corinthians 1:30 says, "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Conversion needs to be followed by regular and intentional intake of Scripture to gain a working knowledge of His Word. The assimilation of God's wisdom through the aggressive pursuit of practical righteousness and personal holiness results in a life well spent serving the Kingdom, a lasting godly legacy, the priceless gift of fellowship with the Lord and His people now and for all eternity.

3. **The Rejection of Wisdom-Proverbs 9:13-18**

In contrast to Lady Wisdom "the woman of folly is boisterous, she is naive and knows nothing" (Proverbs 9:13). Evidently Folly had received Wisdom's invitation (possibly many times) in the past being in the category of the naive who knows nothing and lacks understanding, but she had emphatically refused it.

It should not escape our attention that Lady Folly mimicked Wisdom's methods. She was seated in the high places of the city. Folly "sits at the doorway of her house, on a seat by the high places of the city, calling to those who pass by, who are making their paths straight" (Proverbs 9:15). Notice first of all that her target audience was (and still is) God's people, "those who are making their paths straight." Lady Folly's intention was (is) to derail believers with her enticements.

Unlike Wisdom, Folly did not send out maidens into the city. Folly sits at the doorway of her house and uses her seductive voice to draw weak-willed and unsuspecting guests. Her appeal to the base nature of those who passed by evidently was enough to draw many away from Wisdom. She too prepared a banquet. Her invitation is the same as the one offered by Wisdom but her intention is to derail seekers or new (or possibly carnal) believers with her enticements of "stolen water and bread eaten in secret." Those who respond to her sensual invitation are unaware "that her guests are in the depths of Sheol."

Beloved, God has set before us a lavish banquet and invites us to come and freely dine! "He has brought me to his banquet hall, and his banner over me is love" (Song of Songs 2:4). How foolish we would be to ignore or reject His wisdom and resulting understanding. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wished take the water of life without cost" (Revelation 22:17).

May we seek to build strong testimonies and faithful lives on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ!