

### Excellence of Wisdom

#### Proverbs 8

**Proverbs 8:1-21** - *“Does not Wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors: “To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. O you simple ones, understand prudence, and you fools, be of an understanding heart. Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, and from the opening of my lips will come right things, for my mouth will speak truth. Wickedness is an abomination to my lips.*

*All the words of my mouth are righteous. Nothing crooked or perverse is in them. They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is better than rubies. All the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.*

*“I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge and discretion. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil. Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom. I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By me, princes rule, and nobles, and all the judges of the earth. I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me. Riches and honor are with me: enduring riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, and my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness in the midst of the paths of justice, that I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, that I may fill their treasuries.”*

#### Background Notes

In Proverbs 7 we saw the adulteress calling out to the naïve young man with her seductive temptations. What a contrast we have here in chapter 8! Here Wisdom is personified as a virtuous woman, calling out to anyone and everyone to follow her and reap the rewards of walking in the way of Wisdom. The ways of the wayward woman in chapter 7 were secretive and sinister. The ways of Wisdom in chapter 8 are open and honest. The end result of following the adulteress was shame and death. The end result of following Wisdom is discretion and insight for living.

The benefits of Wisdom are readily available to all who are willing to follow: *“Does not Wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, at the entrance of the doors” (v1-3).*

Wisdom calls out from the tops of the hills, and from the crossroads, and from city gates. You can't miss her call! No one has an excuse, or say that he or she did not hear the invitation. Did you take advantage of the opportunity, and choose to follow Wisdom?

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Wisdom personified invites all to gain her virtues.

Notice that everyone is called to participate in the benefits of Wisdom: *"To you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. O you simple ones, understand prudence, and you fools, be of an understanding heart"* (v4-5).

Even people who are naïve and foolish are invited to reap the benefits of wisdom, and thus they will no longer be naïve and foolish. The way of Wisdom is contained in Scripture, and this means that God made sure that people who are open minded can read the Bible, understand its message and teaching, and gain a wise and an understanding heart.

The character of Wisdom is given in verses 6-9: *"Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, and from the opening of my lips will come right things. For my mouth will speak truth. Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness. Nothing crooked or perverse is in them. They are all plain to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge."* Wisdom speaks truth and righteousness in a straightforward manner. There is nothing scheming or crooked or "under the table" about the way of Wisdom. This should be true of us as believers - in our business dealings, in our everyday activities, and in our service for the Lord.

In verses 10-11, we have the value of wisdom: *"Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her."* Take your choice. Do you want silver or gold or jewels, a hot car, a vacation house? Or do you want Wisdom? Think about it. If you can't have both, what would you choose?

In verses 12-21, we see seven virtues, benefits, and blessings you will receive if you respond to the invitation and the call of Wisdom.

- a. True knowledge and discretion (v12)
- b. Godly hatred of evil, and pride, and the perversion of truth (v13)
- c. Good counsel, discernment of situations, and moral strength to do what is right (v14)
- d. Ability to lead and judge righteously (v15-16). By the way, this is what you want in the church leaders you choose!
- e. Further wisdom and honor (v17-18)
  
- f. Godly character. It's worth more than silver or gold! (v18-19)
- g. Guidance that is righteous and just and blessed (v20-21).

Wisdom personified invites all to gain her virtues.

## **2. “Wisdom personified” may be a direct description of Christ.**

**Proverbs 8:22-31** - *“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth, while as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there. When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him as a master craftsman. And I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men.”*

Down through Church history, these verses have been interpreted as a direct reference to Christ. After all, the New Testament teaches that Christ is not only the Word of God, but He is also the Wisdom of God. *“For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified: to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men”* (1 Corinthians 1:22-25). And from Colossians 2:3, *“In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”*

So the New Testament clearly teaches that Christ is the Wisdom of God. In the second half of Proverbs 8, the question is whether the personified Wisdom is a direct reference to Christ. It may be. However, all students of the Word are not in agreement. Many believe that personified Wisdom here just refers to God’s attribute of wisdom, which of course is intrinsic to His eternal Being.

But what is said of personified Wisdom in these verses could certainly be said of the eternal Son of God before His incarnation. He was there from the beginning - before the creation of this space, matter, time, and universe. And verse 30 certainly backs up what the New Testament says about the Lord Jesus as Creator: *“Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him...”*

Now listen to these well-known verses from the New Testament.

*“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”* (John 1:1-3).

*“For by Him, all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17).*

So “Wisdom personified” in Proverbs 8 may be a direct description of Christ.

## **Practical Application**

### **Follow the Way of Wisdom to Christ.**

**Proverbs 8:32-36** - *“Now therefore, listen to me, my children, for blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and do not disdain it. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD. But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul. All those who hate me love death.”*

Even if the personified Wisdom of Proverbs 8 is not a direct description of Christ, it can certainly be applied to Him. Jesus Christ is the Wisdom of God, as we read in 1 Corinthians 1:24. And following the way of Wisdom will lead us to Christ.

Keep the way of Wisdom (v32). You will be blessed (v34), and you will find life and eternal life (v35). If you don't follow the way of Wisdom, you are sinning against the Lord because you have rejected Christ and instead have chosen eternal death. Verse 36: *“But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul. All those who hate me love death.”*

As John 3:36 says, *“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abides on him.”*

Don't be foolish. Follow the Way of Wisdom to Christ.