

Proverbs 7-9 • The Call of Wisdom and of Foolishness

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The verses that we're going to be looking at here, first of all, in Proverbs chapter 7, I think it's important to just acknowledge for a moment why God has given us this book. Because it's not just like He was looking for something that would complement the Book of Psalms to come after it.

Wisdom is a gift from God and it is God's heart and God's desire that you and I would live a blessed life. God wants you and I to live a life that's full of blessing. He wants us to live a life that's full of joy. He wants us to live a life that is full of fruit.

And in order to do that, in order to experience joy, in order to experience peace, and all the benefits that go along with living for the Lord, God has given us the Book of Proverbs, the Book of Wisdom, that we might have those things. That we might save ourselves from the pain and the heartache that so often comes with living our lives in the opposite way, living apart from God's wisdom, which all of us have done, myself included.

Made many, many decisions in my life that were completely contrary to God's Word and the wisdom that is in His Word and God would save us from that. He would have us, He would have us be saved from that.

And I don't think it would surprise anyone here to learn that the pain and the heartache that we suffer in life is so often just a simple result of just a lack of wisdom on our part. Just a lack of godly, insightful understanding and application, in our lives to do what we've been told to do in the Word of God.

But you have to understand here that we're not taught today to think through how we're living. That's not part of our upbringing. In the United States of America, in this day and age, we are constantly told over and over and over and over again to live by our feelings.

We're told to use our feelings as the barometer of truth. We're told to use our feelings as the barometer of good or bad, right and wrong. And even we who are Christians, and who have been saved from our sin, and who have been given

the Word of God, and we've embraced the Word of God as truth, we still get sucked into that whole mentality of what the world preaches to us every single day. That your feelings are the barometer by which you and I can determine whether something is good or bad, right or wrong. And we've accepted it. And some Christians frankly, haven't even figured it out yet that, that probably isn't a smart way to live.

The Bible tells us that the best way to live is by the wisdom of God's Word. And that means simply listening, and obeying, and being willing to be teachable from the things of the Lord.

Feelings constantly get us into trouble and then we go back to them again. We reap the junk that goes along with following our feelings, and we realize it, and we go, oh, man, that was really stupid. And then we go back and do it again. We follow the same path, just because it's just the way we've been taught.

And yet there's a relearning, there's a reorganization of our thinking. There's a renewing of our mind that must take place for we who are believers in Jesus so that we might finally come to that conclusion of saying, you know what, I'm just spit balling here, but I don't think feelings are a great way to live my life. Or at least a pattern in my life after them. Feelings are wonderful. Thank you, Jesus, you gave us emotions. Thank you for the feelings because they're the flavor of life, but you never meant me to set my path or to set my course based on my feelings.

And yet when I talk to Christians, and I asked them to explain what's going on in their heart, or why they feel the way they do, or what's behind their decisions? What's the first thing I hear is out of their mouth? Well, I just feel that..., well, I just feel that this is the right thing to do. And well, I just really feel... We start off almost every sentence with, I just feel, and man has it's like whiplash in our lives, we've seen such devastation. We've invited such pain. And we've embraced such stupidity because of, I just feel..., I just really feel that..., and we're drowning in it, so here we are.

The reason I preface tonight's study that way is because if we don't recognize that wisdom is often the opposite of feelings, then we're not going to find a whole lot of use for the Book of Proverbs. We're going to find that it's going to run contrary to the way we feel. And then we're going to just go back to our usual way of saying, well that's all good and fine, the Book of Proverbs was interesting and all, but I just feel... I just feel like there's other ways to do things. I just feel like,...ad nauseum.

Wisdom is what God has given you and I to steer clear of the trouble that we would otherwise invite into our lives because we just feel.

All right, Proverbs chapter 7. The 7th chapter includes yet another warning about adultery which we've already seen and several times, just in the first several chapters here of the Proverbs. But this time it is recounted to us by the author, by giving us a familiar, probably to, what was him a familiar scene.

And it's the scene of a wayward woman who is enticing a man who's just, who is out to entice a man into sexual immorality.

And it begins by saying in verse 1, *“My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you; ² keep my commandments and live; keep my teaching as the apple of your eye; ³ bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴ Say to wisdom, “You are my sister,” and call insight your intimate friend, ⁵ to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her smooth words.” (ESV)*

He goes on to say, *“⁶ For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice, ⁷ and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man lacking sense, ⁸ passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house ⁹ in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness. ¹⁰ And behold, the woman meets him, dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.”* That's an interesting phrase. The New American Standard Bible (NASB) uses the words, *“cunning of heart.”* The New King James (NKJV) says, *“she has a crafty heart.”* Actually, I looked up the Hebrew and it literally means, a guarded heart.

But the reason the English translations don't say that is because you and I probably wouldn't know what that means because we think of that as a good thing; a guarded heart. Because we hear other places of the scripture, guard your heart and we think, well, yeah, that's a really good thing to do.

When it says that this wayward woman has a guarded heart we would probably take it as a good thing. And it can mean a good thing in a good sense, but in a negative sort of a connotation, to be guarded also means to be private and hidden. It means to be deceptive. I'm guarding my real intentions from you, that's another way of guarding my heart.

I might say to you, I really like you, but what I'm guarding in my heart is, dislike, if I were wanting to deceive you and draw you in, and that's the negative

connotation that's actually being used here. It's the idea of keeping my motive hidden.

He then goes on to describe this woman. *“¹¹ She is loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home; ¹² now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. ¹³ She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him, ¹⁴ “I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows; ¹⁵ so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.””*

Interesting, this reference to sacrifices is a very simple thing and it just means that she has food to eat. What she's doing..., there's that old saying the way to a man's heart is through his stomach and there may be something to that. But she's enticing him with a sumptuous feast because often when you would go to do a fellowship offering with the Lord, you would come away with food to take home. Give you a doggy bag, I guess. And so you've got food to eat that you'd bring with you.

And so to say, I just did my sacrifices, means I've got leftovers, and so come with me, and we'll let's eat and so forth. And so she's trying to draw him in first through his stomach and then through his senses.

She says in verse 16, *“I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen; ¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.”*

And by the way, that was something that women would do to, once again, as an aphrodisiac, to entice a man to just do something special. It's like a special spread, if you will, on the bed to entice him. And it could be done by a wife to her husband, which would be a good thing. Such coverings were meant to encourage lovemaking.

That's why she says in verse 18. *“Come, let us take our fill of love till morning; let us delight ourselves with love. ¹⁹ For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; ²⁰ he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home.”*

²¹ With much seductive speech (we're told) she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him. ²² All at once he follows her, (and notice how he is likened here) as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast ²³ till an arrow pierces its liver; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.” He's likened to a dumb animal that's caught in a trap and is essentially then slaughtered.

“²⁴ And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. ²⁵ Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, ²⁶ for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. ²⁷ Her house is the way to Sheol, (which is Hebrew for the grave) going down to the chambers of death.”

And so this chapter ends with this warning of the very real danger that is connected with this ongoing sexual immorality. And He acknowledges here that that this individual may appear beautiful and even desirable, but she lays waste to people's lives and her effects can be lethal, so forth.

Yeah, it's funny we look at our society today and we think, wow, our society is laced with sexual immorality. I mean, everywhere we look, you can't really watch a movie today without, unless it's a children's movie, even then you have to be careful. But it's very, very hard to watch any kind of a movie where some kind of sexual immorality isn't displayed or portrayed in the course of the movie, and it's rarely portrayed in a negative light. It's almost always portrayed as a very positive and very fun sort of a thing.

And obviously back in that society, sexual immorality was just as prevalent as it is today. I mean, they didn't have movies that were constantly glorifying the whole idea, but, it was still obviously a big deal because there's a big deal made of it here in the Proverbs. Some great warnings in the Word.

Proverbs chapter 8. In this chapter, Solomon is going to go back and use what we've seen before, which is the literary device of the personification of wisdom as a woman. Calling out to consider her ways to embrace her way of life and this is the Wisdom of God.

The Wisdom of God is constantly being offered, and He writes this in verse 1,

“Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? ² On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; ³ beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:

⁴ “To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. ⁵ O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense. ⁶ Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right, ⁷ for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips. ⁸ All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them. ⁹ They are all straight to him who understands, and right to those who find knowledge.”

And that last verse is very important. The wisdom of God is straight to those who understand. It is right to those who find knowledge. It is, however, crooked to those who don't understand.

I have been amazed over the years to hear people, even online or elsewhere, using the Word of God in a twisted sort of a way, twisting it in such a way as to make it sound immoral or wrong in whatever way and it happens all the time.

But it says here that the wisdom of God is straight to those who understand it. It's "*right to those who find knowledge.*"

And so He says in verse 10, "*Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold,*" In other words, run after it, seek after wisdom. Rather than running after money, rather than running after wealth.

If you're going to run after something in life, run after God's Wisdom. Why? "*for wisdom is better than jewels, (it's better than wealth) and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.*" In other words, wisdom yields better dividends than any possible investment, any possible pursuit.

Think about the things that people pursue today. What do they pursue? What are people pursuing? They're pursuing money, for sure, power, position, youth, happiness, yeah, all those things. And it's just at a breakneck pace. And yet it says here, nothing that you desire in this world can compare with laying hold of God's wisdom.

Verse 12, "*I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.*" Prudence is such an important thing. To get a hold of, and by the way, this is not the same thing as being a prude. It's a different thing altogether.

To have prudence or to be prudent means that you have the ability to show care and thought toward the future. It means, you're a person who thinks through your actions and goes, okay, what are the implications of this? What if I do this? What if I take this road here? Here's a road here. Here's a road here. Where are they going to lead? Where's it going to go? If I take this road, who's going to be affected? Who's going to be affected negatively? Who's going to be affected positively? How about this road over here or is there any other option that I'm not thinking about? That's prudence.

To be prudent is just to think. It's really all about being rational, being reasonable, but it's about being a critical thinker. And unfortunately, once again,

we are living in a culture where critical thinking is not encouraged among young people. And it hasn't been encouraged for a long time.

Those of us who aren't so young anymore, we are still reeling from not being encouraged to be critical thinkers. Again, culturally, we've been encouraged to be emotional thinkers. Making emotional decisions. How many decisions do we make in a day that are based on emotion, based on our feeling? A lot.

And if you don't believe that, look at the responses if you ever read like discussion, and you've got to be careful doing this, but when you read discussions like online, when people start a topic or a thread, whether it's on Facebook or some other social sort of forum. And somebody says..., and the reactions among people are quick and ridiculously passionate.

And I say ridiculously, meaning there's no thought process that goes into the response. It's just an immediate emotional kind of a throwing up of just their opinion. It's just blah, sort of a thing.

And many times if they were just to think it through and consider what's going on, and what's being said, they would come back and go, oh, never mind. But there's just this immediate response because we're taught to do that. We're encouraged to do that. And by the way, social media encourages it because we're sitting there in the privacy and safety of our own little home, nobody's going to punch you sitting there in front of your computer, writing a nasty comment or response to someone's thread.

I mean, you know what I mean? Nobody's going to punch you. Nobody's going to look mean at you. They might send a little mean emoticon or something like that, but who cares. Well, I have to redo that thing, sticks and stones may break my bones, you have to throw in, nasty emoticons in there or something like that. But essentially it's a safe place from which to just respond emotionally.

Prudence thinks through things. And if you're struggling to think through things, get somebody to help you. There's nothing wrong with going to somebody and saying I feel like I'm emotionally compromised in this decision that I need to make. I'm really concerned that my emotions are running so high that I'm not going to make a rational decision. Would you help me to make a wise decision here? And would you help me to separate my emotions from rational thinking because I need to pull out the emotional junk because that's only going to make me respond badly. Responding badly is something that we... I've told married couples or even in pre marriage counseling. One of the things Sue and I have tried to do over our almost 41 years of marriage, is never have an emotional

conversation. In other words, don't talk about something when emotions are running high. Because I've told married couples and pre marriage people many times, we've never once had a productive conversation when emotions were running high. We never have, in 41 years.

Having a cool level head is the only way you're going to think through things in a prudent and rational manner. Learning as a couple to just say, we're not going to talk about this right now, because emotionally, we're not at a place to talk in a civil and productive beneficial sort of a way. It's only going to come out bad so we're not going to do it.

And that's hard to do because you see when we've been emotionally, anybody, when you've been emotionally going at it with somebody, you want satisfaction, don't you? I want to say something that's really going to get her I mean, something that's really...

And it's like when I was a young boy, I teased my sisters and we wouldn't stop until they cried. That's how we knew we'd been successful. I'm looking for some kind of an emotional response to show that I've actually hit the mark. You know what I mean? But you know what that is? That's my flesh. That's my flesh. And I can't afford to bring that into my marriage, into our discussion process.

Prudence would say, quiet, don't talk when you're emotionally compromised. Just don't do it. Don't have a conversation. Be willing to look at each other and say, let's not go there. Right now, you go that way, I'll go this way, let's take an hour and then we'll see if we're at a place where we can talk.

Verse 13. *"The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil."* I think that's a great verse too. In other words, if you're going to embrace wisdom, that means that you're going to begin to reflect God's own heart as it relates to any form of evil. But here's the deal, here's the deal. If we're going to be honest with ourselves and with one another, we're going to admit actually that there are times that we actually recognize in our hearts, a gravitational pull toward evil.

Why do you think those headlines get so many clicks? Why do you think we like to tune in to the headlines that talk about evil? It's not just because we're horrified. It's because we're drawn to it because our hearts are evil and they're drawn to what is of a like sort of a similarity. The very things that destroy lives somehow have this strange enticing magnetism to us and we recognize that we're drawn to them. But wisdom rejects that attraction and it sees the danger that's lurking in the shadows and waiting to pounce.

Have you ever watched a movie where somebody is like unknowingly walking into like an ambush or they're walking into a dark house at night? And you know that, cause the music tells you something bad is about to happen and you're like, don't do it!. It's like, haven't you ever seen a movie? We're sitting here trying to convince these people. Anyway, we were sitting there watching this thing and we're getting all anxious about this because we know they're walking into a trap.

Wisdom is knowing when you're walking into a trap and wisdom goes, I'm not going in there. I'm not going to do that. Right? It's like it sees the danger, it sees the attraction because danger can be attractive.

I remember as a teenager, I was drawn to danger. It was a rush. It's probably the reason I drove so fast and had so many speeding tickets as a teenager. And did all the other dumb things that I did, because it's an attractive thing, particularly to a young person. Well, as we get older, we're attracted just to different kinds of danger. Wisdom tells us, see up ahead? That's not good. And we make adjustments here.

But He goes on here in the middle of verse 13, it says, “...*Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.*” Pretty much everything that is glorified in movies today. Wisdom is contrary to those things so wisdom continues to speak.

“¹⁴ I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength. ¹⁵ By me kings reign, and rulers decree what is just; ¹⁶ by me princes rule, and nobles, all who govern justly. ¹⁷ I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. ¹⁸ Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. ¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. ²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, ²¹ granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.”

Wisdom is promising lavish gifts on those who seek her out and walk in her ways. Now, as we get into verse 22, you're going to see that the narrative changes slightly here as wisdom personified speaks regarding her role in creation. She's just told us here a moment ago, that she's involved in good ruling, good government, and strong leadership. Now she's going to say her role in creation, look at verse 22.

It says, “*The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, (look at this) the first of his acts of old. ²³ Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.*”

Now that's a fascinating statement because wisdom declares that it was at the beginning, it was there at the beginning. In other words, God's first path was the path of wisdom, which means for you and I to walk in that same path is to follow in God's footsteps. That was His first path, okay.

“²⁴ When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. ²⁵ Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth, ²⁶ before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world.

²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there; when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, ²⁸ when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep, ²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master workman,...”

And by the way, that title there, master workman, carries the idea of an architect. Wisdom is saying, I was the architect of all that God did in creation. He says here, “*...and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, ³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.*”

Isn't that something? Here, wisdom is even seen as rejoicing in the creation of mankind and all that goes with it. The human body, the spirit, the soul of man, the things that make up mankind.

And this is obviously where the Bible and evolutionary thought greatly separate, greatly depart from one another. Because evolution would say that chance and time brought along all that you see here. In your body right now, your body is a functioning marvel right where you're sitting. You are a marvel. And the more we learn about things like microbiology, the more we're seeing what a marvel it is.

We've now been able to dig down to the level of a single cell through microbiology. We used to think that single cell things were really simple. Guess what was simple? Our understanding was simple. Microbiology taught us that a single cell is not simple. It is incredibly complex and it includes incredible information in a single cell. Did you hear that? Information. It's a source of information. And we didn't know that before. Back in Darwin's day, a single cell was considered like nothing. Today, it is this incredibly complex mechanism that has all these working parts. And if you pull one part away from it, the whole thing breaks down. Scientists actually have a name for that, it's

called, irreducible complexity. Meaning that you cannot reduce the complexity of a single cell or it ceases to function, right?

It's one of those, it's interesting things, it's a scientific fact; irreducible complexity. If one part of the cell is missing, it doesn't work. You know what evolution teaches? It came together slowly, part by part by part. It grew, it mutated, it evolved. But microbiology has proven that if you take one part of a single cell out of the equation, it does nothing because each part of the mechanism is dependent upon the others. You understand what that's saying?

Now, you would think that would absolutely blow a hole in evolutionary thought. It doesn't. They don't care! We're just going to believe what we're going to believe, which tells you it's not a science, that evolution isn't a science. It's a faith. It's a belief system. And frankly, it's a belief system that continues to grow in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Overwhelming scientific evidence.

Wisdom here says, I rejoiced in seeing how God made this thing. Remember what David said about himself physically? He said, I am fearfully and wonderfully made recognizing the vast complexity of the human body. (Psalm 139:14) He says, I'm fearfully and wonderfully made. Wisdom says, I rejoiced in that making. I was there, I witnessed it, I had my hand in it, and I rejoiced and delighted in what God had done.

Verse 32, *“And now, O sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep my ways. ³³ Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. ³⁴ Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors. ³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord, ³⁶ but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me (actually) love death.”*

This section ends with the urging of the writer to embrace wisdom, to love her, to listen to her. And I think that the key verse here, if you had to underline one of the verses here, it's verse 33 and the first 5 words, *“Hear instruction and be wise,”*

What you and I might say today might be a little different. We might say, be teachable here. Instruction and be wise means listen and put it into practice. But that means being teachable. Do you understand what that means? Right. To be teachable, to simply be open to instruction. It is a foolish person who is a know it all..., and says, you can't tell me anything because I know it all. I already know. I know that, mom, I know. These people haven't told me anything I don't

already know. Yeah, it's not a teachable heart. Wisdom says, hear instruction. Hear it and be wise. Okay?

Proverbs chapter 9. We'll run through this one rather quickly. It says, "*Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars.*" Now here we see Wisdom, once again, as presenting itself to mankind in the form of building a house. And you'll notice that it is hewn with seven pillars.

Now, first of all, seven is God's number of completion, right? It's God's perfect number. Seven days in the week and on and on. Interestingly enough, James, in the New Testament speaks of wisdom and he ascribes these seven aspects. Look at this on the screen from James chapter 3, verse 17.

James 3:17 (ESV)

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

But the wisdom from above is first pure, (that's first) then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.

There's your seven pillars.

Verse 2, "*She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table.*" If we're going to talk about somebody preparing a great feast, we're probably not going to say, slaughtered her beast because we buy our meat from Albertsons where no animals had to suffer. But when they talked about putting on a feast, they would talk about slaughtering a beast, obviously. That's a way of saying putting on the best that you can do. She's mixed her wine, she's set her table.

What are they saying here? They're saying that wisdom has prepared a banquet. What would you say to somebody if they prepared a banquet? I mean, if somebody just put out a big spread and it was just every kind of meat, fruit, salads, just sumptuous stuff all through, you'd look at it and you'd go, wow, how generous for you to offer all of this. That's the idea of what's being passed along.

Wisdom is generous. In other words, wisdom didn't put together a card table and put a cup out, put out some paper plates with some crackers and mustard. Okay? It's this banquet. Come and dine and that's the idea. Wisdom is saying,

Come, come, come. Isn't that exactly what James also says about wisdom? Let me show you this from James chapter 1, verse 5. Look at this verse.

James 1:5 (ESV)

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives (how) generously (right?) to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.

In other words, it's a banquet. It's a banquet table, come and just fill up. Just fill up on wisdom. There is no limitation. Right? It's not like when you come to God, He's like, well, I don't know if I want to tell you anything like that. No, He'll just back up the dump truck. He's not holding back.

Verse 3, *“She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town, (here’s her message) ⁴ “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks sense she says, ⁵ “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. ⁶ Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight. (and not stupidity)”* I threw that in there, but that's the opposite, right? And you'll notice that nobody's left out of this offer. Anyone who will come, let them come.

Verse 7, *“Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. ⁸ Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. ⁹ Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.”*

And what's being said here in these 3 verses is that the heart of man determines whether he's going to be disposed to hearing or disposed to rejecting and the mocking that goes with rejecting.

And so it's basically saying, if you share God's wisdom as a form of correction with a scoffer, it's not going to go well because if they're sitting there scoffing. That's proof to you that they've rejected wisdom. If you say something from God's Word, you say, well actually in the Bible it says, and you, and they go, you believe in that stupid old ancient book of riddles and human wisdom. Is that what you believe in? Really? Seriously? You believe the Bible? That's a mocker. Now you turn around to correct a mocker and you're just inviting abuse.

There's wisdom in holding your tongue with a mocker. When people mocked in front of Jesus, He didn't say a word. They sent Jesus to king Herod after He'd been arrested and Herod was delighted and he sat and peppered Him with all kinds of questions and asked Him to do miracles.

Guess what Jesus said to Herod? Nothing. He didn't utter a sound. Why? Herod was a mocker. He wasn't listening. He didn't care and Jesus knew it. He held His tongue. Again. I pick up so many times online social media things or whatever. I hear about Christians rebuking mockers and then they get this just abuse, but they've invited it. They're the ones that are not being wise.

The Bible says, don't cast your pearls before swine. (Matthew 7:6) You know why? A pig can't appreciate a pearl necklace. They're not going to go, oh, pearls, those are worth a lot. I'm going to take those down to the pond and get some money. It's a pig, they're going to trample them underfoot, right? Isn't that what the Bible says? And they'll turn on you and that's what they do. After they're done dragging through the mud what you've offered, then they turn on you. And this is simply saying, don't do that.

But by the same token, listen, if you say something and a man becomes wiser for it, if you share some correction and somebody increases in their learning, now you've met a righteous person. Before that, that scoffer was a wicked person. They had a wicked heart, but the righteous man, it says here, "*increases in learning.*" He's not a perfect man, but he's right with God because he's opened his heart to instruction. He's teachable and that's so important.

Verse 10, "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*"¹¹ *For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life.*¹² *If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it.* And by the way, that's verse 12. That's the conclusion.

If you're wise for yourself, and that basically means that the man who chooses wisdom is going to reap the rewards of wisdom. The person who turns his back on wisdom and scoffs and says, I'm too smart for that. They're going to also bear the consequences. That's simply what it means.

Now, following verses here, we're going to see that just as wisdom calls out, so also does foolishness. It says in verse 13, "*The woman Folly is loud; she is seductive and (yet we're told about her, she) knows nothing.*" And that first description of foolishness is really important. Did you notice that foolishness is seductive? Why do you think I was so drawn to it when I was a teenager? You

were too probably. Cause it's seductive and that whole idea of seductive means exciting. It means it's arousing. It's like, wow, let's do this.

I remember when my friend said, let's race our cars down this dark county road. I was like, okay. I mean, you're a dopey teenager. It's like you live by the motto, what could go wrong, right? Today, as an adult, I'm like, everything could go wrong but as a kid it was exciting, it was seductive. And that's what foolishness is.

When you're talking to a teenager, and they are embracing foolishness, don't try to convince them that what they're embracing isn't truly exciting. It is and the Bible admits it. And not only that, it also tells us elsewhere that it's fun. It's enjoyable, right? Only for a season, but it's fun. Sin is fun. Don't let anybody tell you otherwise.

It'll destroy your life, but there's a season of fun, and that's usually spring and summer. Fall starts getting to be a bummer, and then you go through the winter of your sin and you're miserable. But hey.

And just try to convince somebody in the spring and summer of their sin that what they're doing is wrong. Just try. They're going to go, what are you talking about? I'm doing great. Yeah.

All you got to do is just wait for the seasons to just progress. Fall will come, as sure as fall comes after summer, fall will come, and then finally, if they still don't repent, winter will come. And they will be outside, shivering, freezing to death, and life will be cold, and barren, and bleak. But, hey, it was sure seductive and fun so, there you go.

But interestingly enough, it says not only is she seductive, but she knows nothing. Now that's a very nice poetic way of saying she's beautiful and stupid. Okay? Foolishness is beautiful and stupid, there you go. She is devoid of understanding and by the way, doesn't that describe everything the world runs after? It's beautiful and stupid, right?

I think about some of the stars that are even like the celebrities that we follow today. Beautiful and stupid describes a good number of them and I'm not trying to be mean here, I'm just saying, it's not their brains that people appreciate for the most part. That's not to say there aren't some smart celebrities, there are, but we look for things that are beautiful. And if they have a lack of understanding, that usually makes them more newsworthy.

You would expect that a world that runs after those things and emphasizes those things are going to be taken with this woman who in verse 14 says, “...sits at the door of her house; she takes a seat on the highest places of the town,¹⁵ calling to those who pass by, (just like wisdom does) who are going straight on their way,”

And she says, “¹⁶ “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” And to him who lacks sense she says, ¹⁷ “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”” Verse 17, stolen water. You and I are like stolen water, isn't water free? It's the idea of taking something that's not yours or doing something that is wrong. Today it's different.

Foolishness is luring people in with different sorts of things that they're saying today. It's now it's, sex is great, it's great. Let me tell you, doesn't matter. Have as many partners as you can possibly amass in this life. It's going to be fun. Oh, and by the way, same sex attractions. They're normal, right? That's what foolishness is saying.

She's saying living together outside of marriage is a smart way to go about it. Hey, try before you buy. It's smart. Being financially wealthy is the best, so run after it. Being young is better than being old. Life is all about happiness. This is the things that foolishness is crying out and drawing people in with and is she gaining a crowd? Oh yes. Oh yes.

The vast majority of human beings on the face of the earth hear the voice of foolishness and they come to her. But look at verse 18, which ends the chapter. This is the individual who comes and follows foolishness's enticing words. “*But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of (the grave, the depths of) Sheol.*”

In other words, it's all a trap. It's all a trap. This whole worldly philosophy of living. The things that the world runs after, it's all a trap because it blinds them to their real needs. It blinds them to eternity, eternal needs by focusing on temporal needs. I'm hungry. I'm thirsty. I want this. I want that now. Instant gratification. There's no prudence, there's no looking down the road. There's no considering the future and it ends in destruction.