

In about a month we will start going through Ecclesiastes, but first we will look at some of Solomon's other writings in Proverbs. We all know how Solomon asked God for wisdom over anything else, and how God granted his request and added to it wealth, riches, and honor. Solomon was a man who had more success than any other person we could think of. He had wealth, power, fame, the adoration of his nation, and an unmatched relationship with God. But he also experienced his share of temptation, drama, and warfare. There is much we can learn from one who lived such a life and who received such wisdom from God. And all that Solomon learned he imparted to his son Rehoboam in the book of Proverbs, as we can see in 1:8,10,15; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:10, 20. Solomon wanted to correct his son's folly with the wisdom granted by God.

Wisdom literature like Proverbs must be read with humility. In order to take in God's wisdom, we must recognize that we don't know everything and that we need help. This is difficult for us. Most men know how hard it is to admit when we are lost and ask for directions. Our pride and fear of looking foolish makes us reject advice. But only fools turn away wisdom. We must accept that we need people to speak into our lives. Don't wait until things get so out of hand before you ask for advice. Let us all be humble together. Let us share our lives, giving and receiving wisdom in humility.

Proverbs 1:1-7 tells us the value of wisdom. Wisdom is prudent and practical for our daily lives (vv. 3-4). Wisdom is intellectual (v. 2), meaning it is good for gaining knowledge. Wisdom is moral (v. 3). It tells us what is right and wrong. And finally wisdom is revelatory, (v. 6). The mysteries of God, which we could never figure out on our own, are revealed through His wisdom. Wisdom is so valuable that only fools would reject it.

In Proverbs, Solomon personifies wisdom and folly as women (7:4-5; 9:1-4, 13-18). Wisdom is like an amazing wife, and folly is like an adulterous prostitute. Notice how in 9:4 and 9:16 wisdom and folly call out to us with the same words. Both are trying to get our attention. If we reject one, we go to the other. Not to pursue wisdom is folly, for wisdom intends to teach us, whereas folly intends to destroy us. Why would we reject wisdom? We all dislike taking advice,

especially when it is unsolicited. And constant criticism or nagging can drive us away. Sometimes we just want to learn for ourselves, and that's okay. But in humility we should also learn to recognize and listen to wisdom when it is offered, even if the way it is offered is offensive to us, because wisdom is so valuable and folly leads to destruction.

Another reason people fall into folly is because she is crafty (7:10). Her strategy is to lure people who are unaware of their own foolishness (vv. 7-9). Fools who have no sense don't realize that they are being tempted. They think they can just walk near the prostitute's house without stumbling. Second, she is always lurking and plotting, ready to pounce when we are vulnerable (vv. 10-12). Third, she tempts us in our areas of greatest weakness (vv. 13-18), which in this case is sex and food. Folly is no fool. She knows where you are weak. Fourth, she lies to us by telling us there are no consequences (vv. 19-20). She says that her husband is away so we won't get caught. We all would like to think we could do what we want as long as we don't get caught. Today so many people do things without thinking of consequences. We can't just dress the way we feel like, or participate in any kind of activity without consequences. Living in the moment is attractive, but every action has consequences, even if we don't get caught. Finally, her goal is our destruction (vv. 21-27). With such a potential for danger, we thank God that He has given us wisdom to help us avoid destruction. Folly calls out to us, but wisdom also calls out, waiting for us to come in and learn.