

In his time, Solomon was the wisest man on earth. When the queen of Sheba visited, she noted that Solomon's wisdom far surpassed the stories she had heard about him. So we would do well to listen to Solomon's God-given wisdom. But so often we instead listen to Wisdom's enemy, which is Folly, who is attractive and clever. Folly preys on us, exploiting our weaknesses and deceiving us into thinking we won't get caught. Those who do not strive to live godly lives fall into Folly's trap. But Wisdom does not ignore us. She also calls to us, telling us that she wants to help us and knows what's good for us. Though nobody likes to receive unsolicited advice or correction, Wisdom calls out all the same so that whoever does receive her may be saved from the destruction that comes from Folly.

Just as Folly has her own devious tactics, as we discussed last week, Wisdom is also clever and has her own virtues. Proverbs 8:2-13 tells us that Wisdom has pure intentions. Folly operates in the shadows at twilight in order to deceive us, but v. 2 tells us that Wisdom calls out to us in the open. She does not need to call us over in secret because her motives and intentions are pure, as described in v. 5-8. Wisdom is a straight shooter; she is transparent and wears no mask. Wisdom truly wants what's for your good, unlike Folly, who scams people into following her to destruction.

Second, v. 14-21 tells us that Wisdom results in much more than just wealth. Though Wisdom is associated with prosperity, what she offers is even better than gold and silver. She offers counsel and sound judgment. By Wisdom rulers govern justly. This is why we must pray for whoever is in power, that God may grant them wisdom and use them for His purposes, whether they are righteous or wicked. Wise leaders are able to bring both sides of the aisle together in agreement on a course of action that is recognized by all as just and right. If you follow Wisdom, not everyone may do as you do, but they may see that your course of action is sound and makes sense. Folly, on the other hand, tears people apart instead of bringing them together in consensus. Solomon's son Rehoboam rejected the counsel of wise advisors and followed the advice of foolish men. He treated his people harshly and his folly led to the division of Israel into two kingdoms. Let us not listen to Folly, but receive Wisdom when it is offered.

Third, verses 22-31 tell us that Wisdom is from of old. Psalm 25:6 describes how God's mercy and love are from of old, meaning they are at the core of God's character. Wisdom too is at the core of God's character. We can see this by how Solomon describes Wisdom being there before the creation of the world and of mankind in vv. 22-26 (the dust in v. 26 refers to the dust used to create man in Genesis 2:7). But Wisdom also is foundational to creation itself, as vv. 27-31 describe. Wisdom was the craftsman by God's side, who rejoiced in the goodness of God's creation. God used Wisdom to create the world. In His wisdom, He turned chaos in to order. So Wisdom is foundational to the way things work in the world. That's why we find that wisdom such as Proverbs 15:1, which tells us a gentle answer turns away wrath, actually will work. When people are angry at us, a gentle answer will calm them down whereas a harsh answer will escalate the conflict. Wisdom is imbedded into the reality of creation.

Verses 32-36 are a final call to heed Wisdom. How much more do we need to hear about the benefits of Wisdom before we listen? This Wisdom that beckons us is the same Wisdom of God by which He sent His only Son to fix the problem of sin. It was the wisest way to bring about mercy and love while maintaining justice and righteousness, and still requiring punishment for sin in the world. Rather than sweep the problem of sin under the rug, the Lord dealt with sin in a way that would spare people and yet fulfill the need to punish wrongdoing. This is the wonderful wisdom of God. His wisdom works, and it is what's best for us, if only we would listen.