

## Proverbs 9: The Choice Is Yours

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The Book of Proverbs / Proverbs 9:1–18

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### Introduction

- Parkway in Pigeon Forge or Downtown Gatlinburg - Endless options as to how you can spend your money. Alcatraz crime museum that houses O.J. Simpson's white bronco? Salt and Pepper Shaker Museum? Or, choose to spend time in God's creation?
- We live in a culture of endless choices. You get to choose where you want to live, what career you want to pursue, who you want to marry, where you want to eat dinner, where you want to go on vacation, the kind of car you drive, etc.
- You can also choose how you respond to God. You can choose to follow Him, or you can choose to not follow Him. You can choose to worship Him, or you can choose to reject Him. You can choose wisdom, or you can choose folly.
- God is not forcing you to follow Him. He has given you free will. What will you choose?
- [Proverbs 9](#) concludes the long introduction to the Book of Proverbs. For nine chapters Solomon pleading with his son to follow lady wisdom. In these verses, one last plea. Before we get to the short, pithy sayings of the next section, one more plea to you as well. The choice is yours, what path will you follow? Two truths from this passage to help you to choose the path of wisdom.

## You get to choose the kind of life you want.

- We've learned much about lady wisdom. She's in the streets speaking above the noise, calling us to respond to her ([Proverbs 1:20-21](#)). She is more precious than jewels and she promises long life ([Proverbs 3:15-16](#)).
- In [Proverbs 8](#) - The wisdom of God which created the universe, is available to you. You can have a relationship with lady wisdom. You can spend your life with lady wisdom. The choice is yours.
- Lady wisdom has built a house carved out of seven pillars (vs. 1). Seven = number of completion. A reference to creation?
- Lady wisdom is extravagant. She prepares a feast of meat and wine. In ancient times, meat a delicacy eaten on special occasions.
- She calls out from the high point in the city. High points were places of worship. The temple in Jerusalem built at the highest point in the city. To know lady wisdom as presented in the Book of Proverbs is to know God.
- vs. 4-6 - The invitation to the inexperienced - to those who still need to make a choice about which path they are going to walk. This is all of us. We daily decide if we're going to walk the path of wisdom or not.
- The invitation is to come and share a meal with Lady Wisdom. If you share a meal with lady wisdom, you will find life. It's an intimate invitation - an invitation to a relationship with Lady Wisdom.
- vs. 13 - Lady Wisdom is not the only woman extending an invitation. Lady Folly also extends an invitation. She could not be any more different than Lady Wisdom. She is a rowdy woman, and she has no lasting wisdom to offer.
- vs. 14 - She's also at the high point of the city. Think of all the false gods in Solomon's day - gods that Solomon would eventually give his heart to.

Think of the gods we tend to give our hearts to: success, wealth, sex, etc. Our hearts are idol factories. It's foolishness.

- vs. 16 -18 - Lady Folly appeals to our fleshly desires (vs. 17). What wisdom offers seems good and desirable in the moment, but what she offers ultimately leads to death.
- Solomon presents to his son two invitations. The choices is his. Which will he choose? The choice is yours. Which will you choose?
- A simple truth: You get to choose the kind of life you want. That's what we all want to hear - we have the freedom to determine our own destiny. However, while you get to choose the kind of life you want, choose carefully because the reality is that there are only two choices as to how you can live your life.
- **There is not a third choice.** Solomon presents two choices: wisdom or folly. Many Christians want and pursue a third choice - somewhere between wisdom and folly. We want a little Jesus while at the same time a life of pursuing what we want. We want wisdom as a resource to be used when we need it, but not a relationship with wisdom. We want enough Jesus to save us from eternal hell, but not enough Jesus to actually change our lives. Cultural Christianity plagues the American church. Cultural Christianity is the third choice many want. How many of us are trying to live on a third path that we've created for ourselves where we try to claim the Christian faith while at the same time living for our desires?
- **To live for a third choice is folly.** Especially when you consider that God has given us an invitation to know Him in His fullness. The hope of the Christian faith is that you can know God, and that He can change you. The One who is all wise can make you wise. It is foolishness to live any other way than pursuing Jesus with everything we are.

## The way you respond to correction reveals the invitation you have accepted.

- Between the two invitations are verses about rebuking a mocker and instructing the wise. How do these verses fit?
- vs. 7-12 show what wisdom and folly produce in your lives, and these verses also help us to understand how to read the rest of Proverbs. If you accept the invitation to live with Lady Wisdom, you will embrace the teachings in [Proverbs 10-31](#). On the other hand, if you accept the invitation to live with Lady Folly, you will reject the teachings of [Proverbs 10-31](#).
- Belief determines behavior, and behavior reveals what you believe.
- How do you know you're wise? You embrace correction. Solomon has constantly reminded his son to listen to his teaching and apply it. Wise people listen to godly instruction and apply. If you are unwilling to listen to criticism and change, then you are doomed to perpetually repeat the same mistakes.
- Mockers respond to correction with attacks. Mockers make fun of others and put them down. Mockers think they are always right and don't listen. Mockers say things like, "Who are you to tell me what to do? I don't want to hear that religious stuff. You are close minded." Mockers are easily offended. Mockers look down on the opinions of others. Are you a mocker? Mockers are hard-hearted. You live in a culture full of mockers - people who always talk but are unwilling to listen.
- Some of us in this room are mockers. We may claim faith, but deep in our hearts, we aren't open to listening. We don't want to be corrected. Some of us are downright hard-headed, and your hard-headedness is frustrating to us and destructive to you.
- Simple instruction: Don't correct a mocker. (Similar to [Titus 3:10-11](#).) For those who have determined in their hearts that they will not listen to

godly counsel, it can be a waste of time and frustrating to try to reason with or correct a mocker. Sometimes the best way you can handle a mocker is simply to pray for them and not engage them. This is helpful... You don't have to engage everyone who adamantly opposes you. You don't have to go looking for an argument. Sometimes the wisest course of action is to walk away. You don't have to prove you're right to the person who is closed to hearing what you have to say.

- On the other hand, the wise person is open to correction. The wise person wants to grow in wisdom. The wise person fears the Lord ([Proverbs 9:10](#)). Remember, to fear the Lord is to understand who God is and also to understand who you are.
- **What characterizes someone who is willing to receive correction?**
  - **You have a realistic view of yourself.** You know you're limited - you don't know everything. You know you're sinful. You need the help of wiser Christians to help you to see blind spots in your life like pride, self-centeredness, etc. You know you're on a journey. (e.g. - difficult for me to take correction about playing piano or preaching because of pride...)
  - **You fight the temptation to be prideful when corrected.** It stings to be corrected. It's a shot to our pride to be told that we're wrong. When someone corrects us it's easy to be quickly offended (An attitude of, "I'm not wrong" or an attempt to defend ourselves). It's easy to despise the critic. (Who are you to tell me how to live? You're just as messed up as I am.) It's easy to be full of self-pity. (If you understood how hard my life is, you wouldn't be so fast to correct me.)
  - **You are eager to learn from others.** ([Proverbs 27:6](#)) Being corrected is painful, but you can't grow in wisdom without it. The reality is that some of us are way too sensitive to the correction of others because we don't want to grow. We don't want to know where

we are failing. However, the wise person is eager to learn from others, and the wise person understands that sometimes correction isn't delivered in the best way. Just because someone delivers criticism in a way that isn't as loving or as gentle as you might want it to be doesn't mean that the criticism is invalid.

- **You are quick to make changes to your life.** A wise life is a repenting life. A wise life is a life that doesn't put off what the Spirit of God is calling you to do right now. The problem for some is you know what to do, but you fail to do it. That's prideful sin.
- A willingness to be corrected is evidence that you have chosen the invitation of wisdom. For some of this morning, we need to pray that God will give us a desire for humble teachability.
- Some of us need to ask God to forgive us of our pride and our lack of teachability.
- Some of us need to repent of trying to create a third way: a little Jesus and a lot of the world.
- A clear invitation: will you live in the house of wisdom or the house of folly. To embrace wisdom is to embrace Jesus. He is the wisdom of God. He is the ONE who gives us life everlasting. He is the ONE who is seated NOW in high place - at the right hand of the Father - He has ascended to the high place because He was willing to descend to the low place - a sinful and broken world where He perfectly lived out the wisdom of God. Although He was considered a fool by those He came to save, He never lived as a fool. The ONE who is truly wise lived perfect in every way, and then went to a cross to die in our place. He went to the place of the dead yet rose again in victory three days later so we might be forgiven of our sins and given the gift of eternal life. Today, Jesus, the wisdom of God, offers you an invitation to dwell with Him. If you choose invitation you will find life as you repent of your sins and trust Him by faith.

