

Proverbs 1:24-27

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/prov/prov-1/proverbs-124-27/>

Lady Wisdom warns of the reality that some will continue to ignore her calling. This results in a myriad of undesirable consequences.

Lady Wisdom begins this section with a lament: “*Because I called and you refused.*” The *because* that begins this verse is not, as is often the case, linking directly with the preceding verse (23) as a cause-and-effect. Instead, it is setting up an if/then statement that culminates in verse 26. So, the word *Because* is preceding the cause-and-effect rather than standing in the middle of it. *Because you refused and no one paid attention, etc., I will laugh at your calamity and mock your dread.* Our refusal to listen is the cause, and wisdom’s response to turn us over to the resulting destruction is the effect.

This might seem like a harsh and unkind reply on the part of Lady Wisdom. But *reproof* and instruction require factual reality. The goal is not for the student to feel good about themselves. The goal is for the student to abandon folly and the resulting disastrous consequences. The student should embrace wisdom instead.

The point here is to acknowledge reality—to describe to the youth how the world actually works. *I called and you refused.* The fault is on those who do not accept the offer. *I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention.* When someone does not value wisdom, it is a choice they are actively making—choosing to focus in another direction they see as more lucrative. *You neglected my counsel.* People often choose to trust in other entities than wisdom. And, finally, *you did not want my reproof.* Truth is an acquired taste and some of the lessons of reality are hard and uncomfortable.

Anyone who chooses to be a fool and walk in folly will have the consequences of folly. In a great irony, Lady Wisdom will *mock* the folly of the scoffer. *I will also laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your dread comes.* This harshness is the consequence of our poor choices. Notice the importance of the word “also” in the phrase *I will also laugh at your calamity.* It is a consequence: the result of mocking wisdom is to be mocked by wisdom. This is the way things are. It is like saying, “If you turn away from me you won’t see me any longer and I won’t see you.” It is kinder to be clear about this upfront, and perhaps offend, than to sugarcoat the true effects of turning from wisdom. The goal here is not to coddle the youth but to help them understand what is at stake. They have a choice, and the choice has immense consequence.

This is meant to be a stark warning. Wisdom is calling (and has *called*). And, as Lady Wisdom says, *you refused.* She *stretched out* her *hand*. Wisdom is doing its part; it is taking action to invite. We have agency to accept or decline the invitation. And *when no one paid attention* to wisdom’s attempts, *neglecting counsel* and *not wanting her reproof*, those declining have used their agency to set themselves against wisdom. As verse 3 told us, wisdom requires receiving instruction. In this case, instruction and *reproof* has been declined.

This is a bad idea. A very bad idea. Ignoring wisdom will not work out well for any of us. It will result in *dread* and *calamity*. These consequences come fast and hard, wreaking havoc on our lives: *when your dread comes like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind*. Wisdom takes a derisive posture to these consequences. When we ignore the *reproof* of wisdom, *dread comes like a storm and calamity like a whirlwind*. The negative consequences of following the folly of foolishness rushes upon us and stirs up confusion, lifting us from reality and clouding us from the truth. Following foolishness results in *calamity, distress, and anguish*.

Distress and anguish come upon us when we ignore wisdom. The warning is stern on two fronts: first, the circumstantial disaster that eventually follows foolishness— *calamity, dread, distress, anguish*—and the distance to wisdom. Perhaps more devastating to us than the direct consequence of our foolish choices is that it sets us in opposition to wisdom.

The message here is clear: DO NOT IGNORE WISDOM! Wisdom is shouting from the streets, *calling and stretching out its hand*. It is reaching for you. Ignoring it and shunning its advances is not good for you, to say the least.

This is the reality of what is at stake. The very essence of life. By partnering with wisdom, we have a chance at a fulfilling life, even in the midst of the mystery and uncertainty of circumstances (“hebel” see Ecclesiastes 1:2). If we ignore wisdom and turn the other way, that uncertainty will drive us into *calamity and dread*, the consequence of folly.

Biblical Text

**"Because I called and you refused,
I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention;
²⁵ And you neglected all my counsel
And did not want my reproof;
²⁶ I will also laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your dread comes,
²⁷ When your dread comes like a storm
And your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.**