

Proverbs 1:28-33

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/prov/prov-1/proverbs-128-33/>

Lady Wisdom warns that trying evil for a time and/or using wisdom only for circumstantial change is not going to work. But the faithful will discover security and peace, no matter their circumstances.

Youth often adopt this perspective: I will “have fun” while I am young (YOLO!) and then get serious about life later on. In essence, “I will ignore wisdom for now but turn to it later in life when my wild oats are sowed.” The practical reality of this is that we live in foolishness until we tire of our calamity, our distress, and our dread (see notes on Proverbs 1:24-27).

But we often discover it is not so easy to just flip a switch from foolishness to wisdom. When we establish patterns in our lives, it is difficult to recast our perceptions, attitudes, actions (and perhaps addictions).

Solomon continues his introduction to Proverbs through the voice of Lady Wisdom. She says that when fools have experienced the distress and anguish of calamity (v. 27) as the consequences of their folly, they *will then call on me, but I will not answer*. That is, when the circumstances are no longer tolerable, and the fools want to escape their anguish, they will reach out in circumstantial desperation.

Wisdom seems to take another hard line. Even though the fools *call*, she *will not answer*. Even though they *seek diligently*, they *will not find* her. Proverbs is focused on clearly delineating the realities of the wise and the foolish, and what sets them apart from one another. The goal is to clearly set forth the reality of cause-and-effect in the world. The student can embrace it or ignore it, to their own benefit or peril.

Furthermore, this is Solomon’s introduction to the book and his agenda. He seeks to impress upon the youth the vital importance of accepting wisdom in one’s youth—as opposed to a sowing-wild-oats path.

Why does wisdom reject these pleas from the fools who have experienced dread? It is *because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord*. The fools cannot turn to wisdom in order to avoid negative consequences.. They made their choices and must experience the consequence of their actions. *They hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord*. What was chosen as a heart posture cannot be redeemed through a superficial response to circumstances.

Why is this the case? A clue can be found in the statement: *So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way*. This would indicate that the reason the scoffer has turned to wisdom is to escape the negative consequences of their foolishness. But that’s not the way it works. Actions have consequences. And the scoffer who *spurned the reproof* offered by Wisdom will reap what they have sown; they will *eat the fruit* of the vine they planted.

Our choices have consequences. The fools *hated knowledge*, did *not choose to fear the Lord*, *would not accept Wisdom's counsel, and spurned reproof*.

Because of these foolish decisions, the scoffers *will eat of the fruit of their own way and be satiated with their own devices*. The word for *satiated* is the Hebrew “saba,” which can also mean “full” or “satisfied.” We cannot avoid the consequences of our actions; we must reap what we sow. Part of the negative consequence of foolishness is to be self-absorbed; it is the natural consequence of choosing to put one's trust in oneself rather than in God.

There is no answer from Wisdom that is appropriate to give to a self-absorbed person asking for deliverance from adverse consequences they continue to bring upon themselves. Wisdom gave the answer from the outset “Stop being foolish.”

The foolish cannot escape the consequences of their foolishness. *Waywardness* and *complacency* of the *naïve* will *kill* and *destroy* them. They waited until it was too late to avoid disaster. Solomon makes clear it is in the student's best interest to choose wisdom and the fear of the Lord early in life. To establish the practices of wisdom and pursue a character centered on wisdom. It is the way to avoid really severe adversity. This is what the youth needs to understand they are choosing if they choose folly.

If the youth denies reality, they will find themselves on the path of destruction. We always have a choice, but the consequences of those choices cannot be avoided. Further, it takes an active choice of deliberate intent to seek and gain the benefit of wisdom. The way of *fools* is the way of *complacency*. This indicates that without actively seeking to grow in wisdom, *complacency* leads to foolishness and folly. And this is a path that *will destroy them*.

On the other hand, *he who listens to Wisdom shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil*. Perhaps difficulties will come. But they will not be self-induced. And the wise will be equipped to deal with them. Solomon here is setting the stakes. The student may or may not experience challenging circumstances, but will be *at ease* from the *dread of evil*. *Evil* is the source of these terrible adverse consequences. And *evil* can be avoided by choosing wisdom.

This sets the stage for the rest of The Book of Proverbs. What follows is not about how to manipulate life so that we get the most comfortable experience and the most preferred circumstances. It is to listen to the reproof and instruction of Wisdom, and thereby gain understanding for how to live constructively, within whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Acquiring wisdom leads to good character. Wisdom teaches us how to choose a true perspective, that sees reality as it is, and transcends circumstances.

This ends the opening speech of Lady Wisdom. She has given us this warning and this invitation at the very beginning. This is the reality of the stakes at hand. What we choose to do in response will determine our path and the quality of life we lead.

Biblical Text

**Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently but they will not find me,**

²⁹ **Because they hated knowledge**

And did not choose the fear of the Lord.

³⁰ **“They would not accept my counsel,**

They spurned all my reproof.

³¹ **“So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way**

And be satiated with their own devices.

³² **“For the waywardness of the naive will kill them,**

And the complacency of fools will destroy them.

³³ **“But he who listens to me shall live securely**

And will be at ease from the dread of evil.”