

Proverbs 8:14-21

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/prov/prov-8/proverbs-814-21/>

Lady Wisdom continues her speech, declaring her value to all mankind.

The previous section of Lady Wisdom’s speech was focused on the value gained in human life when we align our actions with the path of wisdom. Solomon expands on this thread. These verses are about how wisdom operates, how it affects the people that align with it and the world at large.

Verse 14 begins with “*Counsel is mine and sound wisdom*” (vs 14). Lady Wisdom is using the possessive pronoun to claim that the virtues of *sound wisdom* and *counsel* belong to her. They are from her and they are hers to distribute.

The Hebrew word translated *counsel* is “*esa*” and it means “advice” or “purpose.” Because wisdom is the vein of truth, she is the one to be entrusted with advice; the *counsel* to be listened to and followed. The Hebrew word translated *sound wisdom* is “*tusiya*” and it can mean “success” or “to substantiate/support.” Like *counsel*, *sound wisdom* belongs to Lady Wisdom. She is the key ingredient to successful living.

To this, Lady Wisdom adds: “*I am understanding, power is mine*” (vs 14). The Hebrew word translated *understanding* here has a connotation of meaning, or purpose. Wisdom allows us to discern what is the truth; what really is. But it also gives us insight to have *understanding* of what really matters. Our purpose. The destination of life’s journey.

The Hebrew word for *power* is often translated “might” or “strength.” Wisdom is both the truth (*understanding*) as well as the *power* to live the truth. It is the map for the journey (*understanding*), and the energy (*power*) to reach the destination of the journey.

Lady Wisdom next makes a substantial claim about her authority—“*By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, all who judge rightly*” (vv 15-16). The last phrase, *all who judge rightly*, is perhaps the most important part of this claim. Wisdom is the agent by which any authority is used properly. The inference is that authority used *rightly* brings prosperity and flourishing, while the abuse of authority brings misery and suffering.

Wisdom is the application of “understanding” applied to “power.” For authority figures who wield it well, it brings *justice*. Whether or not they acknowledge wisdom, it is the way good rulers rule. It is the way good leaders lead. Good leaders use their authority/power constructively.

Without wisdom, one cannot influence effectively. The diversity of verbs is important here as well—*reign, decree, rule, and judge*. These are practical exercises. Measurable behaviors. Different arenas in which wisdom is applied. When applied with wisdom, they all result in *justice*.

Justice is the alignment of actions with standards. An example of “justice” being aligned with a standard is the left margin in this commentary, which aligns with a vertical line on the left side of the page; it is “left-justified.” In a similar manner, the use of authority with wisdom aligns human order with God’s original design for things to work in harmony, for a shared purpose. The New Testament pictures this harmony by comparing it to a human body, where all parts work together for the benefit of the whole (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).

So, Lady Wisdom is the strong undercurrent of truth in human character and in constructive human interaction. It is the trusted place for *counsel*, the guide to help discern successfully, and the wind that blows in the sails of effective leaders.

Some have argued this is Old Testament/Wisdom Literature language to communicate the role of The Holy Spirit within Divinity. In both Hebrew and Greek, the word translated as “spirit” can also mean “wind” or “breath.” The Holy Spirit is the air that breathes life into the lived experience of New Testament believers (Galatians 5:22-25; 6:8).

Lady Wisdom brings all of these claims to a crescendo by saying, “*I love those who love me; those who diligently seek me will find me*” (vs 17). It is not just rulers and princes who have access to wisdom’s *counsel* and *understanding*. All who seek wisdom can be as wise as any king, if they seek *diligently*. Wisdom, not position, is the true authority. Just as in the previous section ([see notes on Proverbs 8:10-13](#)) wisdom, not silver, is the true treasure.

We can partner with wisdom. She loves us as we love her. We seek and find. The word *diligently* suggests we need to seek continuously, consistently. It is a transcendent search—never fully completed. We are always learning, always growing, always seeking...and always finding. Wisdom is here to help, to guide, to teach. To invite us to apply it and to live. She is available and she is the most important treasure of all.

Importantly, the promise here is that any who *diligently seek* wisdom *will find* wisdom. This means that there are no obstacles, no dependence upon cooperation by any other people. No requirement of particular circumstances. Anyone who is willing to pursue wisdom will find it if they persist. That means that gaining wisdom, the greatest treasure, is a goal each of us can set for ourselves, and gain if we endure in our search.

Wisdom declares “*riches and honor are with me*” (vs 18). Two things every human desires is to be a part of something bigger than themselves and to live a life of abundance—a true manifestation of their best self-interest. Here, wisdom claims to be both. She is the possessor (*with me*) of *riches*. The true source of a prosperity that is real and lasting. Wisdom brings spiritual riches which transcend mere material wealth.

Inferred is that the *riches and honor* promised by Wisdom will not necessarily pan out in a manner prescribed by the world system. Rather, wisdom promises true and lasting *riches and honor*.

In his epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul asserts that those who patiently continue in doing good will be greatly rewarded at the judgment, because in doing good they are seeking glory and

honor from God (Romans 2:6-7). To love others as we love ourselves is, in reality, participating in something bigger than ourselves, and the path to our own ultimate fulfillment. The promise of wisdom is to elevate our perspective to see into the spiritual dimension, which is a key and lasting part of reality.

Honor is both an inward facing and an outwardly observable treasure. The word *honor* has the connotation of “weight” or importance. It is everything that matters. Wisdom is what is best for oneself (true *riches*) and what is best in a community (*honor*). Culture is a consensus within any group about what behavior is honorable. When we walk in wisdom, we make a positive impact on culture.

In each case, both for *riches and honor*, Wisdom points the way to find and traverse the spiritual roads that lead to our greatest benefit. Wisdom gives us agency to discover and possess both *riches and honor*, because we can rely on God’s promise that if we follow His ways, He will be faithful to see that we gain both *riches and honor* (1 Peter 5:6).

This is reinforced where Lady Wisdom says, “*Enduring wealth and righteousness* are mine” (vs. 18). Wisdom leads the way to seek and find lasting *wealth*. Wisdom allows us a means of self-actualization to achieve a true and lasting success—a spiritual prosperity that transcends mere circumstances.

A companion to this great spiritual wealth is *righteousness*. *Righteousness* is alignment with God’s creative design. When God created the world, He pronounced it as good (Genesis 1:31). God’s design is for all things to work together for good, for His intended purpose (Romans 8:28). This includes social harmony, and stewarding character within any community.

The word *enduring* that qualifies both *wealth and righteousness* shows that wisdom promises a *wealth and righteousness* that lasts without end. This contrasts with physical treasures. These are things that show a glimpse or a mirage of true wealth. Physical treasure such as money or possessions ultimately fail. Everyone leaves behind anything they accumulate in this life; “You can’t take it with you” as the saying goes. In this life, *righteousness* relies upon the cooperation of others.

But in the spiritual realm, we can align our hearts with God’s, and walk in His righteousness, regardless of the choices made by others. This is the great news of the New Testament, that God has given us the power to walk by faith, believing that God’s ways are for our best (Romans 1:16-17).

Wisdom is the path to a consistent expression of *true* wealth and lasting *righteousness*. When we walk in wisdom, we rise above our circumstances. We can also enjoy fulfillment within the circumstances we face, because we are aligning ourselves with God’s ways. In our physical existence, we can experience the spiritual realities we choose—because we have chosen the perspectives and are making choices directed by Lady Wisdom.

Solomon (via Lady Wisdom) expounds slightly on her claim that *riches and honor are with me*. Lady Wisdom asserts “*My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, and my yield better than*

choicest silver” (vs 19). This statement harkens back to similar language just a few verses prior ([see notes on Proverbs 8:10-13](#)). The emphasis here is that the *fruit* wisdom bears is more valuable than *gold* or *silver*.

And it is not just that wisdom edges out material wealth by a slight margin. Wisdom is better than *pure gold*, and the *choicest* (or best) *silver*. Solomon is saying wisdom is better than money (not just twenty dollars of money but millions or billions of dollars—all the money in the world). Whatever *gold* and *silver* might allow us to amass, wisdom is better.

In Revelation, Jesus exhorts believers to buy all the gold they want, refined gold that comes from Him. The implied means to purchase this unlimited amount of gold is to hear His voice, and engage with Him in an intimate manner, as we do with those with whom we dine (Revelation 3:18-20). Jesus is the agent of creation, both in its initial construction as well as in its sustaining (Colossians 1:16-17). So it makes sense that Jesus is also the source of all wisdom.

“*I (Wisdom) walk in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice*” (vs 20). The *fruit* that Wisdom bears is more valuable to us than anything the world has to offer. This verse speaks to why. What is more valuable than money? The path of wisdom. The *way* of life.

More important than what we have is how we use it. More important than where we go is who we are/what we do when we are there. The value of wisdom is its *way*. It is a lifestyle, a worldview, a perspective. It transforms everything from vanity to purposeful. And that path, more than a one-off circumstance or solution—is *the way of righteousness*.

The way of righteousness is how one participates in and contributes to creating social harmony. How one stewards right living. Wisdom walks *in the way of righteousness*, meaning that wisdom and righteousness are aligned. When we walk in wisdom, we walk in harmony with God’s creative design.

Wisdom also walks *in the midst of the paths of justice* (vs 20). The Hebrew word translated *justice* literally means “a verdict” or “judgment.” If God will judge us by the standard of what is true, wisdom is walking *in the midst* of that *justice*. *In the midst* means that wisdom is enveloped by *justice*; they are so intertwined that they occupy the same space. Again, Solomon is speaking of alignment. That the way to gain a positive judgement from God is to walk in Wisdom’s way.

The effect of *righteousness* and *justice* is “*To endow those who love me with wealth*” (vs 21). The true riches of this life are alignment with God, walking according to His Way. When we live in wisdom, we experience peace and joy. We express purpose and effectively influence our communities. Wisdom brings abundance to those who share its way.

The word for *wealth* here is the Hebrew word “yes” and it means “substance.” It can also mean “being” or “existence.” By *wealth*, Solomon really means the abundant life. It is how to truly be. The substance, meaning, purpose, and weight of what life is all about. “*That I (wisdom) may fill their treasures*”. In other words, that Wisdom may resource us to live life abundantly.

Biblical Text

**¹⁴ Counsel is mine and sound wisdom;
I am understanding, power is mine.**

**¹⁵ By me kings reign,
And rulers decree justice.**

**¹⁶ By me princes rule, and nobles,
All who judge rightly.**

**¹⁷ I love those who love me;
And those who diligently seek me will find me.**

**¹⁸ Riches and honor are with me,
Enduring wealth and righteousness.**

**¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold,
And my yield better than choicest silver.**

**²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice,**

**²¹ To endow those who love me with wealth,
That I may fill their treasuries.**