

Proverbs 8:32-35

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/prov/prov-8/proverbs-832-35/>

Humans have an amazing opportunity to align with the beauty, value, and worth of wisdom.

In many ways the pinnacle of the core message of The Book of Proverbs, the speech of Lady Wisdom in Chapter 8 has been a summary of Solomon's intent. The speech presents the value of wisdom. It shows that wisdom originates from God, was present at the creation and is now woven throughout reality. As the speech comes to a close, Solomon focuses on the amazing opportunity each human has to align with the beauty, value, and worth of wisdom.

Solomon, through the voice of Lady Wisdom, addresses his audience directly: "*Now therefore, O sons, listen to me*" (vs 32). Lady Wisdom addresses the audience as *sons*—the same greeting of familiarity and affection Solomon has used throughout Proverbs (Proverbs 7:1-5, 2:1-5). Although Solomon broadened to include all humanity earlier in the chapter, in verse 4, the primary audience are the young men Solomon is training to walk in wisdom's ways.

The conjunction *therefore* is important and helps us see Solomon's intent throughout the entire chapter. Lady Wisdom has just described in vv 22-30 how she has been around since before the creation of the world and was woven into the very fabric of reality, its heart and joy. The conjunction *therefore* harkens to these amazing claims. If these things about wisdom's origin and effectiveness are true, they are great reasons to *listen* to what she has to say.

Lady Wisdom gives another reason for listening to her: "*For blessed are those who keep my ways*" (vs 32). Again, if wisdom is so vital to reality, aligning with her is the only way to truly succeed within that reality. The only way to be *blessed* is to uphold (*keep*) the *ways* of wisdom. Fighting against it, going our own way, is not just bad, it is bad for us. Fighting against reality only leads to pain and death. Aligning with reality is the *way* to life—the path of blessedness.

To be blessed, to succeed in life, we have to "*Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it*" (vs 33). The word for *heed* is the Hebrew "sama," which actually means "hear intelligently," distinguishing it from the kind of listening that goes in one ear and out the other. If we *neglect* wisdom, it is synonymous with fighting against it.

If we do not *hear* and apply what wisdom instructs, taking action ourselves (*be wise*), it will not do us much good. "*Blessed is the man who listens to me*" (vs 34), Lady Wisdom reiterates. To gain the great benefits of wisdom we must listen, learn, and apply her *instruction*. To *be wise* requires learning from wisdom and then awakening/activating wisdom within us by taking and intentionally using wisdom to guide our choices.

The *blessed* man is "*watching daily at my gates, waiting at my doorposts*" (vs 33). The wise man does not move without Wisdom. He waits until Wisdom arrives. He does not rush into action if Wisdom is not there. He waits for her. He watches for her. The *blessed* man is dependent on Wisdom.

Both *watching* and *waiting* might seem passive in our take-charge world. Perhaps what Solomon is suggesting is that the value of wisdom is an exercise in delayed gratification. It takes patience and consistency. It is not quick and instinctive. We have to be focused on Wisdom and be willing to sacrifice some instant gratification in order to reap the benefit of what Wisdom offers.

The phrase *watching daily at my gates* paints a picture of wisdom as a city while *waiting at my doorposts* pictures wisdom as a house. In each instance, the *gates* and the *doorposts* mark the entrance—the starting point. The idea seems to be that those who seek to be wise will pursue wisdom as the starting point of their endeavors, not as a means to bail them out of adverse consequences incurred from making bad decisions.

In the end, the work and delayed gratification is worth it, “*For he who finds me finds life*” (vs 35). The flesh promises instant gratification, but it lasts only a short while and does not bring the joy it advertises. What the world calls “life” is actually “death.” Waiting on wisdom, acting out of wisdom, and orienting our perspective around wisdom brings *life*. It is in our true best interest. Life works best when we follow the path of wisdom.

Not only so (and certainly directly related), he who *finds* wisdom “*obtains favor from the Lord*” (vs 35). The Hebrew word translated *favor* is “*racon*,” which can mean “delight” or “pleasure.” *The Lord* is pleased when we choose the path of wisdom. Why? Because it is best for us. We are His creation, and He desires His creation to work well, to be consistent with His created order—which was all “very good” (Genesis 1:31).

When we follow wisdom, we gain life. The opposite is also true: *But he who sins against me injures himself; All those who hate me love death*” (vs 36). To sin against wisdom is to walk apart from wisdom. Sin is making choices to walk apart from the beauty and harmony of God’s created order. To hate wisdom is to hate life. And to *hate* wisdom is to *love death*.

It will follow then that all that is in the world will claim “this is life” but will be death. What is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life, are all things we can (and sometimes do) love (1 John 2:15). Falling to these lusts led to the fall of humanity, which brought death into the world (Genesis 3:5-6).

Wisdom allows us to see reality as it is, a part of which is to choose a perspective that sees the ways of wisdom as leading to life, rather than seeing the ways of the world as leading to life (when they actually lead to death).

Because wisdom is the heart and the soul of all of the created order, it aligns with the delight of creation, which Wisdom has identified as herself. Wisdom is truth and reality. And God approves when we make choices that align with what He has done.

Biblical Text

³² “**Now therefore, O sons, listen to me,
For blessed are they who keep my ways.**

³³ **Heed instruction and be wise,**

And do not neglect it.

³⁴ Blessed is the man who listens to me,

Watching daily at my gates,

Waiting at my doorposts.

³⁵ For he who finds me finds life

And obtains favor from the Lord.

³⁶ “But he who sins against me injures himself;

All those who hate me love death.”