

Proverbs 9:4-6

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/prov/prov-9/proverbs-94-6/>

Wisdom calls out to the naïve and the fools, inviting them to the table she has prepared.

Having set the stage for Wisdom's prominence and intentional activity, Solomon describes a scene in which wisdom is calling from the heights. And this is what she is saying: *Whoever is naïve, let him turn in here!* (vs 4).

Throughout Proverbs, the stated audience of the book has been the youth, *naïve*, or "simple ones" (Proverbs 1:4 and 8:5, for example). The word is not necessarily derogatory. It is about those who are unsure. The people who lack certainty. This is, in the end, all of us. Here it likely focuses on young men being tutored by Solomon's teachings—those lacking in knowledge and experience.

To these *naïve* ones, wisdom says, "*turn in here!*" This turning is a kind of breaking away. Move away from your path of naivety and into the path of wisdom. This makes clear that acquiring wisdom requires making a choice. Solomon asks his students to be intentional.

This is the great hope of Solomon's book of Proverbs, that his pupils will choose the path of wisdom over the path of folly. Wisdom is something that can be chosen. It can be sought and found. Solomon desires that these young listeners see the way of wisdom, value its path, and turn toward it—aligning their lives with God, reality, and their best self-interest.

Solomon breaks the voice of Lady Wisdom here and adds: *To him who lacks understanding she (Wisdom) says...*

The phrase *him who lacks understanding* is most often used of fools in The Book of Proverbs. It is used in Proverbs 6:32 and Proverbs 7:7 to talk about the foolish young man making a mistake with the adulteress. So, there is a difference here. In the first phrase, Lady Wisdom was addressing those who were *naïve*, who didn't know better. Here she is about to address those who have already gone astray. Those who have made mistakes.

To them, her invitation is the same: *Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.* In the first three verses (see notes on Proverbs 9:1-3), we saw Lady Wisdom busy at work preparing *food, wine*, and a table for a meal. Here we see why. The invitation is for the foolish to *eat my food and drink of the wine I have mixed.* In other words, to engage in fellowship with Wisdom. To come into her home, her dwelling, and share a meal with her.

This is reminiscent of Jesus's invitation to His wayward servants in the Laodicean church. Jesus speaks words of chastisement to them, because He disciplines those He loves (Revelation 3:19; Proverbs 3:12). Jesus tells His wayward followers that they can have the great riches they are lacking by hearing His voice and entering into fellowship with Him at His table (Revelation

3:20). It seems Jesus's admonition in Revelation echoes the divinely-inspired words of Solomon recorded in Proverbs.

Forsake your folly and live (vs 6). To those who have shown a *lack of understanding*, there is still hope. Turn away from your *folly*. And live. Again, the emphasis here is that each person has a choice to pursue wisdom or *folly*. The path of wisdom leads to life, benefit, and fulfillment. We gain life when we connect with God's design for us. But the way of folly leads to separation from God's design; and separation is death.

The imagery of the *food* and the *wine*, the meal at wisdom's table, is a clear symbol of the source of life. Foolishness is death. Wisdom is life. Turn from death and live. This is the same basic proposition God offered Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:17). It is the same basic choice Moses offered Israel (Deuteronomy 30:19). It is the choice Jesus offered His disciples (Matthew 7:13-14). It is the choice the Apostle Paul poses to each New Testament believer (Galatians 6:8).

"Life or death" is also the choice Solomon poses to each of his students. It is the choice between living in God's design or living apart from God's design. To choose life is Wisdom's invitation to us all. Partake of the sustenance of life and you will find the energy and ability to live life for all it is worth. It is there that abundance and blessing will be found.

Lady Wisdom follows this with a wonderful invitation to *proceed in the way of understanding* (vs 6). This sounds very similar to the words of Jesus: "Go. From now on sin no more" (John 8:11). Fellowship with Wisdom sets any person on the path of *understanding*. It realigns them with God's design. And this is Wisdom's great and lasting invitation, to redeem our journey from one of death and confusion and put us on course for a vibrant and successful life.

Biblical Text

⁴ **"Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!"**

To him who lacks understanding she says,

⁵ **"Come, eat of my food**

And drink of the wine I have mixed.

⁶ **Forsake your folly and live,**

And proceed in the way of understanding."