

June 21, 2020

“Receive Wisdom’s Gifts”
Lesson 3 of Unit

Proverbs 8:8-14, 17-21

Intro

Wisdom was valued in the kingdoms on display in the Old Testament. Pharaoh had his wise men in Exodus, and Solomon had his advisors in I Kings 4. Daniel served Nebuchadnezzar as a wise counselor, and Joab called on the wisdom of the woman of Tekoa in 2 Samuel. Kings then and leaders now rely on people of wisdom to help rule a nation.

Fortunately for us, the wisdom in Proverbs isn’t just for kings or their advisors; it’s available to all with the intention that everyone live by it and practice it. Proverbs 30 calls four small animals wise for the way they use their skills in practical ways to help them survive and thrive.

This week’s lesson again focuses on wisdom’s appeal to follow that path, to hear and respond when she calls.

Read Proverbs 8:8-14

1. Read 8:6-7, and then move on to vs. 8. What claim is wisdom making about her words? Find three words from these three verses that positively express what wisdom claims about her words.
2. Verse 9 contains a condition. What must be done in order for a person to accept wisdom’s words? What does it mean to be discerning?
3. Wisdom presents two choices in vs. 10; what is the choice?
4. In what way(s) is wisdom better than riches in verse 11? Why can nothing compare with wisdom?
5. In vs. 12, how is wisdom dwelling with prudence the opposite side of I Cor. 15:33? What is important or significant about wisdom possessing or knowing knowledge and discretion?

(Note on vs. 13 from our textbook: “The attitudes cited in this verse are all sins that are part of evil behavior. Pride and arrogance are used synonymously, the only place in the OT where these two words occur together. Pride in particular is condemned because it stands in the way of the humble heart that the Lord both requires and honors. Evil behavior and perverse speech are built on pride and arrogance. Speech that is perverse goes against what the Lord finds pleasing. It is counter to the kind of speech that Paul will state later that followers of Jesus are to demonstrate.)

6. In vs, 14, wisdom claims to have insight and power. Why might these two qualities be beneficial to one possessing wisdom? See Prov. 21:22, Prov. 16:32, and Eccl. 7:19 for some other ideas about this.

7. What are the two parts to the promise of 8:17? How are each of those parts important?

8. Verse 18 seems to suggest material benefits from obtaining wisdom. How could this both be the case and not the case at the same time?

9. How is the comparison of wisdom as “fruit” in vs. 19 appropriate? Why and how is the “fruit” of wisdom better than wealth?

10. In what ways is wisdom connected to righteousness and “the paths of justice” (vs. 20)?

11. In what way(s) is wisdom a “rich inheritance” (vs. 21)?

Application: One of the key ideas from today's lesson is about choices. What do we love? Do we desire to be rich as God defines the term, or rich as the world defines it? And some will no doubt ask (or at least think) "Isn't it possible to be wealthy *and* wise?" There are certainly several people in the Bible who are both wise and wealthy. But there are also many warnings about the spiritual dangers that material wealth and possessions can present. We are encouraged to have a heart toward God first and foremost.

Jesus' warnings about the "deceitfulness of wealth" (Matt. 13:22) and the rhetorical reminder of "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Matt. 16:26) serve as cautionary reminders that wealth is not the most important thing.

Jesus' words are completely consistent with today's lesson. Wisdom is pleading with all who will listen to choose her above any and all forms of material wealth. These verses in Proverbs 8 serve to remind us that nothing material can compare with the value of seeking and gaining wisdom.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for the wealth and prosperity we enjoy in America. But thank you even more for the sources of wisdom we have been blessed with, parents and Your Word at the top of that list. Help us to use the wisdom we have gained to be examples to those in our spheres of influence. In Jesus' name, Amen.