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"Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Proverbs 1: 33).

Wisdom's Call

Lesson Subject: Great peril comes to those who reject reproof.

L28. Date: June 1984. **Text:** Proverbs 1:20-33. **Topic:** Wisdom.

The book of Proverbs is one of the books of "wisdom literature" found in the Old Testament. The key to the book is in the term wisdom. But the wisdom referred to is more than mere academic skill. It carries a moral and spiritual quality. Wisdom is the divinely enlightened understanding of what is good in the sight of God; it also involves a personal relationship with God. Proverbs 1:2-4 sets forth the purpose of the book: "to know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. " The book does not deal with how the sinner comes to God, but how the redeemed live before God.

The wisdom of knowing and serving God is applied to all areas of life in the book of Proverbs. There are eight different Hebrew words used for wisdom and three different words for fool. *Wisdom* is always the opposite of evil. To have wisdom is to know God, because "*the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*" (Proverbs 9:10).

This week's study is concerned with "Wisdom's Call." Wisdom is given personality in the lesson text and issues a call for men to walk with God, warning of the dread consequences for those who refuse.

I. THE APPEAL OF WISDOM (Proverbs 1:20-22)

A. Wisdom issues an urgent appeal. She "*crieth without*" (verse 20). She does not wait for men to seek her; she goes forth calling men to know

God. *"Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?"* (Proverbs 8:1). *"She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city"* (Proverbs 9:3).

The urgent appeal of Wisdom is the revelation of the heart of God. He sends forth His messengers (including His only begotten Son!) to invite people to come to Him. The danger of living in sin magnifies the urgency of the invitation from God.

B. Wisdom issues a public appeal. She cries *"in the streets: . . . in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city"* (verses 20, 21). The *"streets"* are the thoroughfares where people pass to and fro. The *"place of concourse"* is the market place where people stop to buy and sell. The *"gates"* are the entrances of the city where court is held. The *"city"* is the crowded area where men gather. Behold the scope of Wisdom's call!

The fact that Wisdom calls wherever people gather is proof of God's loving concern for all people. Not one is left out. Wisdom's call is given here and there so all can hear and have opportunity to respond. Praise God for such grace!

C. Wisdom issues a needed call. Simple ones love simplicity, scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge (verse 22). How such sinners need to receive wisdom from God. *"Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding"* (Job 28:28). The foolishness of sinners is seen in their saying, *"Let us eat and drink; for to morrow we shall die,"* at the time God calls *"to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth"* (Isaiah 22:12, 13). Sinners will be utterly destroyed if they continue in their sins. That is why God issues the call of Wisdom. Blessed is the person who has the wisdom of knowing and serving God.

II. THE INVITATION OF WISDOM (Proverbs 1:22, 23)

A. Who is invited? Wisdom invites the *"simple, "scorners,"* and *"fools"* to come to her. (1) The *"simple"* are those who are open to any influence, good or evil. *"The simple believeth every word"* (Proverbs 14:15). (2) The *"scorners"* have heard the truth and rejected it. That is why *"the scorner is an abomination to men"* (Proverbs 24:9) and *"judgments are prepared for scorners"* (Proverbs 19:29). (3) The *"fools"* are those who are hardened, obstinate, and perverted in their sin. *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity"* (Psalm 53:1); *"Fools make a mock at sin"* (Proverbs 14:9); yet, God loves the simple, the scorner, and the fool so much He calls them by

His grace.

B. What is the invitation? *"Turn you at my reproof"* (verse 23) is Wisdom's way of saying, "Repent." God's command is, *"Cast away from you all your transgressions"* (Ezekiel 18:31). *"Take with you words, and turn to the LORD: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously"* (Hosea 14:2). *"Turn ye even to me with all your heart"* (Joel 2:12). *"Repent. . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out"* (Acts 3:19). The way of repentance is the way of forgiveness and deliverance. *"God. . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30).

C. What will God do if people respond to Wisdom's invitation? *"I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you"* (verse 23). The promise of pouring out His Spirit is fulfilled in the blessed indwelling of the Holy Spirit in those who trust Jesus (John 14:14-26; 16:13; Romans 8:9). To implant His word within confirms the covenant of grace promised by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:6-13). That is what happens to each person who trusts Jesus Christ as personal Savior. That is God's personal promise to you.

III. THE REJECTION OF WISDOM (Proverbs 1:24-32)

A. Fact: Sinners reject Wisdom's appeals though they are multiplied and sincere (verses 24, 25). Look at the words which indicate Wisdom's appeal to sinners: *"called. . . stretched out my hand. . . counsel. . . reproof."* They indicate that God appeals to sinners on many occasions and in many ways to call them from their sin and into His grace.

B. Warning: Rejection leads to rejection (verses 26-28). Those who reject Wisdom are left to their own ways. God will show no sympathy to them in their calamity and fear (verse 26; Psalm 2:4). He will leave them desolate (verse 27; Matthew 23:38). He will not answer their prayers (verse 28; I Samuel 28:6). They rejected His call of grace, so He will reject their cry of despair.

C. Reason: The sinner's rejection of Wisdom is the cause of Wisdom's rejection of the sinner (verses 29, 30), *"because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear"* (Isaiah 65:12). *"The wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy"* (II Chronicles 36:16). He who rejects God's mercy will experience God's justice.

D. Justice: The sinner receives what he deserves (verse 31). God warns, *"I will visit upon you the evil of your doings"* (Jeremiah 23:2). *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall*

he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

E. Peualty: Just judgment is coming; the harvest of sin will be reaped (verse 32). *"As righteousness tendeth to life: so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death"* (Proverbs 11:19). How wise it is to seek the Lord before judgment comes.

IV. THE BLESSINGS OF WISDOM (Proverbs 1:33)

God promises a twofold blessing on those who hear Wisdom's call and trust Him and obey Him. The blessings are safety and peace.

A. "Safety" has to do with protection from dangers which threaten us from the outside. God promises, *"Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble"* (Proverbs 3:23). *"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever"* (Psalm 125:2). Read Psalm 91:1-16 and rejoice in God's protection over His own.

B. "Quiet from fear of evil" refers to inner peace and assurance. Meditate on this question: *"When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"* (Job 34:29). *"He will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints"* (Psalm 85:8). Those who trust Him have experienced the truth of the promise, *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"* (Isaiah 26:3). He can lie down in peace and sleep, knowing that the Lord makes him dwell in safety (Psalm 4:8).

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9: 10). Therefore, no one has begun to be truly wise until he knows God personally by faith in Jesus Christ.

Your wisdom will be shown by your response to God. Listen and obey His counsel as He speaks to you through the Bible, teachers, preachers, counselors, and by the inner impressions of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the meaning of "*wisdom*" in the Proverbs?
2. What is the appeal in Proverbs 1:23?
3. What is God's promise in Proverbs 1:23?
4. How is personal responsibility shown in Proverbs 1:24, 25?
5. What is the warning of Proverbs 1:26-28?
6. What blessing is promised in Proverbs 1:33?
7. How can you be a person of wisdom this week?

