

June 28, 2020

Lesson 4

# WISDOM'S FEAST

ADULT/YOUTH

ADULT/YOUNG ADULT TOPIC: An Invitation  
to Wisdom

YOUTH TOPIC: An Invitation to Wisdom

CHILDREN

GENERAL LESSON TITLE: Feast on Wisdom  
CHILDREN'S TOPIC: Wisdom's Feast

DEVOTIONAL READING  
Psalm 119:97-104

ADULT/YOUTH

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 9

PRINT PASSAGE: Proverbs 9:1-6, 8-10, 13-18

ADULT KEY VERSE: Proverbs 9:6

YOUTH KEY VERSE: Proverbs 9:10

CHILDREN

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 9

PRINT PASSAGE: Proverbs 9:1-6, 8-10, 13-18

KEY VERSE: Proverbs 9:10

## Proverbs 9:1-6, 8-10, 13-18—KJV

WISDOM HATH builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:

2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

3 She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,

4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

5 Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.

6 Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

.....

8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee.

9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

## Proverbs 9:1-6, 8-10, 13-18—NIV

WISDOM HAS built her house; she has set up its seven pillars.

2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.

3 She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city,

4 "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says,

5 "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.

6 "Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight."

.....

8 Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you.

9 Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

.....

13 A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.

14 For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city,

15 To call passengers who go right on their ways:

16 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

17 Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

18 But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

.....

13 Folly is an unruly woman; she is simple and knows nothing.

14 She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,

15 calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way,

16 “Let all who are simple come to my house!” To those who have no sense she says,

17 “Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!”

18 But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.

**UNIFYING LESSON PRINCIPLE:** Two competing voices call to us on life’s journey: Wisdom and Folly. Why should we heed the call of Wisdom? Wisdom gives instruction to the wise, yet the foolish suffer their own downfall.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

*Upon the completion of this lesson, the students will be able to do the following:*

1. Compare and contrast the call and promise of wisdom with those of folly.
2. Desire to walk the path of wisdom and receive its benefits, avoiding the peril of foolishness.
3. Grow in the fear and knowledge of the Lord as the first step in walking in the way of wisdom.

## AGE-LEVEL POINTS TO BE EMPHASIZED

### Teachers of ADULTS and YOUTH

—Proverbs 9 marks the conclusion of the first major section of the book.

—Wisdom’s activity of building, preparing for a feast, and efforts at inviting people to the feast contrast sharply with the activity of the foolish woman, who simply “sits at the door of her house . . . calling out to those who pass by” (verses 14-15, NIV) and offers them “stolen water” and bread (verse 17).

—Wisdom and the foolish woman use identical language (verses 4, 16), but while Wisdom’s feast leads to maturity, insight, and life, the foolish woman’s deceptive offer leads to death.

—The Scripture text lays out an in-depth view of wisdom. Proverbs declares that the wise love wisdom.

—The Scripture text defines the scope of wisdom.

—The Scripture text creates a picturesque analogy of the strength and beauty of wisdom.

—Proverbs declares that the wise love wisdom.

—Scripture teaches to build relationships with the wise.

## Teachers of CHILDREN

- Wisdom is personified as a generous host who throws a banquet.
- Wisdom’s house is described as having seven pillars—like the temple of a cultic shrine or a large domestic house—big enough to accommodate many guests.
- There is enough room for everyone who chooses to enjoy Wisdom’s provisions.

- Wisdom provides a healthy, balanced diet that leads to life, while Folly presents that which is stolen and leads to death.
- Both Wisdom and Folly invite passersby to feast, and everyone must choose where to “dine.”
- True wisdom begins with putting God first and learning from Him.

## THE CHRONOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

A large part of the book of Proverbs was written by Solomon the son of David (the king of Israel) along with other authors including Hezekiah, Agur, and Lemuel. The book of Proverbs is best understood of as a library of Israelite wisdom. Many of the proverbs in the book come from King Solomon, who reigned in the tenth century BC. Other proverbs were written by the scribes of King Hezekiah, who reigned from 715 to 686 BC. The book itself mentions Solomon—who reigned during 971–931 BC—as author or collector of its contents (see Proverbs 1:1; 10:1). It mentions that the proverbs were copied by Hezekiah’s men (see Proverb 25:1). Agur (Proverbs 30:1-33) and Lemuel (Proverbs 31:1-9) are also credited for certain sayings called “the wise” and “oracles.” Proverbs were also found in the Septuagint which dates to approximately 200 BC. Based on this range of dates, the writing of this book is between 1000 BC and 200 BC.

The book of Proverbs was begun during the time of Solomon, prior to the Babylonian exile, and it was written with the intention of teaching wisdom to all. This book of the Bible personifies wisdom as an idealistic woman. There is an ordered flow of thought in the first nine chapters of the book, but this is not the case in the remaining sections. From Proverbs 10:1–22:6, there are 375 proverbs of Solomon, each of which points in some

way to the choice which is to be made between Wisdom and Folly. The remaining 284 verses are divided among the other authors, with the content carrying on the same theme of wisdom and folly. The latter part of this book is best studied on a topic basis.

## THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING OF THE LESSON

The book of Proverbs dates back to the time of Solomon before the Babylonian exile. This book outlines and catalogues the lives of God’s people in a pre-exilic Israel. The predominantly masculine language used in the Proverbs points to the different cultural spheres of men and women and the different child-rearing practices employed with boys and girls. In the predominant culture of this era, married couples were rarely in close daily contact. The cultural setting of this book is not based on emotion but rather on an understanding, recognition of, and reverence for God demonstrated by obeying God’s laws and performing the required rituals.

The historical books trace the development of the kingdom of God through covenants with Israel. Biblical Wisdom Literature like Proverbs never explicitly mentions Israel’s election or covenants and contains a few acknowledgments of the historical details of Israel’s faith. However,

the common appeal to the central theme of “the fear of the LORD” can be easily integrated with Israel’s historic faith. While the book of Proverbs is practical, it is not superficial or external because it contains moral and ethical elements that stress upright living which emanates from a right relationship with God. This book is both a model for the tender impartation of truth from one generation to the other and a vast resource for the content of the truth to be imparted.

## PROMINENT CHARACTER(S) IN THE LESSON

**King Solomon:** the generally accepted author of the book of Proverbs; Proverbs 1 is attributed to him. He was king in Israel and he is said to be the richest and wisest king ever.

## KEY TERMS IN THE LESSON

**Built (verse 1)—Hebrew: *banah* (baw-naw’):** constructed; fashioned; fortified; fortifying to build; “builded” (KJV).

**Come (verse 5)—Hebrew: *halak* (haw-lak’):** to go, come, walk.

**Highest (verse 3)—Hebrew: *tabbur* (tab-boor’):** highest part; center; height.

**Rebuke (verse 8)—Hebrew: *yakach* (yaw-kahh’):** to decide, adjudge, prove; to reprove.

**Simple (verse 4)—Hebrew: *pthiy* (peth-ee’):** one; simple; perhaps open-minded.

**Teach (verse 9)—Hebrew: *yada* (yaw-dah’):** to become familiar with; to accustom oneself to; to befriend; to know.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE LESSON

### I. Introduction

- A. The Feast Is Set!
- B. Biblical Background

### II. Exposition and Application of the Scripture

- A. A Wise Invitation  
(Proverbs 9:1-5)
- B. The Source of Understanding  
(Proverbs 9:6, 8-10)
- C. The Foolishness of Folly  
(Proverbs 9:13-18)

### III. Concluding Reflection

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. The Feast Is Set!

Proverbs 9 teaches about divine wisdom. This chapter of the book of Proverbs reveals that real insight comes from an understanding and knowledge of who God is and it advises that fearing God is the beginning of wisdom which brings with it an extended lifespan. This chapter practically discusses the attributes of a wise person, a wicked person, a scoffer, and “the foolish woman.” In this chapter, a feast is arranged, and man is invited. Wisdom places before him life in all its fullness. Folly’s menu is death. The question is what man will choose: life or death. A wise person will choose life. A foolish person will choose death.

We can conclude from the book of Proverbs that the scoffer seldom takes to correction—that rebuking a wicked person is a futile effort while correcting a wise person is welcoming.

## B. Biblical Background

The book of Proverbs has its background in the cultural Jewish belief system. In the foremost verses of chapter 9, Wisdom is introduced as a magnificent and beneficent queen. Wisdom

here is constantly in search of guests to fill her house and has hewn out her seven pillars to build a very firm and great-looking house capacious enough for all her guests. Heaven may be the house that is being referenced in the text.

## II. EXPOSITION AND APPLICATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

### A. A Wise Invitation

(Proverbs 9:1-5)

**WISDOM HATH builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.**

This chapter allegorically presents a royal invitation to attend a sumptuous banquet with two different hosts for two different banquets. The first host is Wisdom and the second host is Folly. Wisdom has constructed a sturdy, well-built structure to host the great banquet. The seven pillars that support this figurative house of wisdom are harmonious with other references to the number “7,” such as sevenfold gifts of the Spirit (see Isaiah 11:2; Revelation 1:4), or the seven-branched candlestick of the Tabernacle (see Exodus 25:37). Wisdom is presented as a queen, sitting in her royal palace and inviting mortals to a splendid banquet. The number “seven” is seen as the symbol of perfection and stability as contrasted with the harlot’s house, mentioned Proverbs 7:8, which is a dangerous and unstable dwelling.

The figurative preparation for Wisdom’s banquet includes preparing the entree, mixing the wine, and setting the table. This could represent the ordinances, gifts, and blessings prepared for the people of God who walk

in faithful obedience. In countries with hot climates, wine was often used to purify and to refresh. Here, the reference to wine can symbolize the influence of God’s Spirit and the power which enables us to make wise, godly decisions.

Both Wisdom and Folly are personified as a woman and both invite their simple, undecided, wavering guests to dine at their tables and to be influenced by their fare. These two women can only prepare the meal and extend the invitation—but the response to the invitation is totally up to the guests. Likewise, we are not faced with temptations that we cannot endure, because God has promised not to allow us to be tempted above that which we are able to withstand but will, with the temptation, provide a way of escape so that we may be able to bear it.

Those who are called simple are those who are silly, immature, weak, and likely to be deceived, but are still willing to learn. Interestingly, this invitation to wisdom excludes those who are outwardly knowledgeable but inwardly prideful and conceited (see Jeremiah 5:21; Hosea 7:11). It is not enough to just avoid those who are foolish. We must also embrace and connect with the company of the wise and learn from their ways. The simple as well as the learned are both in need of instruction from Lady Wisdom.

To “eat of one’s bread” is an indication of the nutritious spiritual provisions available in the house of Wisdom. This parallels with the symbolism of the Lord’s Supper, which includes the

bread and the drink that the believer is invited to partake in with gladness and with singleness of heart, in remembrance of Christ's sacrificial atonement.

## **B. The Source of Understanding** **(Proverbs 9:6, 8-10)**

**Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. . . . Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.**

Foolish or simple people are those who lack good sense, good judgment, or reasonable discretion. One's simple ways are often reflected in decision making and in other unwise actions or words. First Corinthians 15:33 (NIV) informs us that simple ways can be contagious; leaving one's simple or foolish ways may also involve leaving one's simple or foolish companions: "Do not be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good character.'"

Words of wisdom and advice are good but not when they are directed toward someone who will most likely not receive them. This perspective is reminiscent of the guidelines given to lifeguards who are told to wait to rescue swimmers who are wildly flailing in the water—because if they are helped while flailing, they may cause the rescuer to also drown. Likewise, it is not wise to waste wisdom on those who are not ready to receive it. Even twelve-step programs only accept those who are willing to acknowledge that they have a problem and that they need the help.

When wise people are taught, they retain that wisdom and add to their existing

accumulation of knowledge. But when the unwise receive instruction, that instruction leaks out like water poured into a container filled with holes.

The fear of the Lord is the respect, honor, and esteem of the Lord. When we fear God we put God's will first so that all the other less-significant things can be added. People who are wise reveal their status through esteeming the law of the Lord as more important than one's own desires. Wise individuals live lives that reflect holy obedience to the God who is above all human knowledge (see Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 1:7).

## **C. The Foolishness of Folly** **(Proverbs 9:13-18)**

**A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.**

Here, Folly is personified as a sultry, carnal, sensual temptress who is outwardly attractive and enchanting, but inwardly empty. She knows nothing and ultimately leaves a trail of tears and disappointment in her wake. Her loud and boisterous demeanor attracts much attention—but when one listens closely, there is no substance. The senior saints used to say that one can always tell when a wagon is empty because it makes a lot of noise. This imagery can be contrasted with the wise Proverbs 13 woman who acts in ways that are godly.

Folly is characterized by idleness, laziness, and the wasting of time. She is not just content with wasting her own life, but she negatively influences the lives and habits of others as well. Although the voice of Folly is the loudest and although there have been many examples of failure, masses of people still decide to follow her. Carnal pleasure excites and stimulates, while the one involved turns a deaf ear to holiness and conviction.

As we go through life and we are walking the straight and narrow path with our eyes fixed on the prize of the high calling of God, we must also be wary of those who desire for us to walk the crooked pathway. That means that we cannot afford to take any spiritual vacations. Seasoned saints used to say it like this: “An idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” It would do us good to post a figurative sign in our collective consciousness and unconsciousness that reads, “No loitering on the premises.” Due to the fact that Folly has no shame, it is important for us at all times to maintain our spiritual aim. Isaiah 30:21 (NIV) gives this powerful promise to everyone who will believe: “Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”

In this verse, vice imitates virtue. Folly uses the same words and phrases as Wisdom and issues a counterfeit invitation to the foolish folk. Satan is quite capable of transforming into an “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Folly attracts “undecided voters” who may be headed in the right direction but have not developed the capacity to persevere in the Way and to sustain the practice of pressing toward spiritual maturity. Second Timothy 3:5-7 gives a very close parallel to this scenario: “Having a form

of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

The metaphor of “stolen water” primarily refers to adulterous intercourse just as is signified by the Scripture “drink waters out of thine own cistern” (Proverbs 5:15). In marriage, the grass may seem greener on the other side, but upon closer inspection what looked like greener grass is often just AstroTurf. After an affair, there is rarely anyone there to help pick up the pieces of a shattered marriage, a traumatized family, and a conflicted circle of friends. An ounce of prevention is worth much more than the cost of a divorce. An affair never solves marital problems; it compounds them. Some people consciously or subconsciously drift into an affair as a way to cope with their current uncomfortable or unfulfilling relationship connection. Perhaps they are desperate and feel they have run out of options. An affair may be exciting, but the odds are that it will destroy any possibility of salvaging a marriage. Desperation creates complication and the residual effect is usually worse than the original cause. We must watch what we feed our minds and how we think. In our contemporary society, it is difficult to avoid scenarios in the media or in everyday life that are tempting in some way. But just like a smart consumer avoids offers that would be detrimental to one’s financial health, similarly it is also wise to avoid offers that may prove detrimental to one’s relational or marital well-being. Marriage requires work, so we should think of our marriage as a job. If we work little, we get paid little. But if we put

in the time and maximize the effort, we can expect powerful and commensurate results.

When we give liberty to our lusts the result is devastation in the lives of the people and families that are connected. A moment of pleasure can yield a lifetime of pain. It is the task of the Tempter to present a picture of something that seems too desirable to resist. But Solomon is uniquely equipped to tell the story of how sexual oversaturation may be initially enjoyable but is eventually empty and unsatisfying. Our contemporary culture celebrates sexual liberty and denigrates sexual discipline. This mentality contributes to the overlooking of many practical problems associated with failure to approach sex in the way that God commands. Ungodly sexual practices can cause our relationship with God to suffer, and can break the trust and intimacy with others. It can make our witness worthless and inflict damage upon our extended family. Infidelity can produce physical problems, emotional scars in children, and divorce and financial ruin. The fallout from infidelity is a big price to pay for such an insignificant benefit.

### III. CONCLUDING REFLECTION

Every day of life, there is a plethora of different offers made to us that we must decide to either accept or to reject. For this reason, it is important to be prayed up and to be read up so that our choices will be godly ones. We are able to distinguish between wise and foolish choices through comparing our options to the Word of God and by passing the particular issue through the prism of protracted prayer. As we mature in our walk with God, it is the hope that there is some wisdom that we will accumulate with age. As we develop a healthy and holy respect and reverence for God, we will acknowledge God in all our ways and He in turn has promised to direct our paths (see Proverbs 3:5-6). As long as we live we will have many choices to make. But several of those choices can be made in advance of the situation and this tactic will help us to have a much higher percentage of healthy decisions made in the long run.

#### PRAYER

*Dear God, help us to make choices in life that bring us the most wisdom and that bring You the most glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

### HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

*(June 22-28, 2020)*

#### Wisdom's Feast

**MONDAY, June 22:** "Law Provides the Edge" (Psalm 119:97-104)

**TUESDAY, June 23:** "Wise and Foolish Bridesmaids" (Matthew 25:1-13)

**WEDNESDAY, June 24:** "Church Proclaims the Wisdom of God" (Ephesians 3:7-13)

**THURSDAY, June 25:** "No Wise Person among You?" (1 Corinthians 6:1-6)

**FRIDAY, June 26:** "Wise and Foolish Builders" (Matthew 7:24-27)

**SATURDAY, June 27:** "The Benefits of Making the Wise Choice" (Psalm 1)

**SUNDAY, June 28:** "Wisdom Delivers Many Benefits" (Proverbs 9:1-6, 8-10, 13-18)