

## Proverbs 9 – Folly's Worldview is Shortsighted

We have seen that everlasting wisdom for everyday life calls out to us and receiving it is a choice we must make in response. Proverbs 9 continues this theme, and adds a stark reminder-there is more than one voice vying for our attention. As wisdom calls out to us, so does foolishness.

This has been depicted often in animation and comics as characters wrestle with the choice between wisdom and folly. An angelic figure appears on one shoulder, a devilish figure on the other, and advice is given by both. They make their cases until the character makes his or her choice-wisdom or folly.

While this plot device is often used humorously, the reality of the competing calls of wisdom and folly serve as a warning for us. Wisdom and folly are vastly different in both intention and outcome.

Unlike wisdom, who invites us to leave behind naivete and pursue the knowledge of God, folly invites us to only embrace the simplicity of human desire. And that invitation is not given in a way that we might miss it. Folly is boisterous, calling us loudly. She offers no wisdom; rather, she favors ignorance, which better suits her purpose and worldview-take whatever is desired and be accountable to no one (v. 17).

The problem is that folly's purpose and worldview is incredibly shortsighted. None of us live life apart from accountability. Verse 18 makes that clear. When you live outside of God's boundaries-outside of His wisdom-it ends in disaster. A life lived in the foolishness of sin costs you everything.

### WISDOM'S FEAST: An Invitation to Become Wise

If you are walking in wisdom in your daily life right now, it shows that you have accepted Jesus's invitation. It reveals that you are walking towards him, walking with him, and trusting him. On the other hand, if you are walking in foolishness, it shows that you are walking towards idols (Satan) and trusting in them. The proof is in the mundane details of your life. If you are lazy, quarrelsome, cannot accept correction, cannot pay the bills on time, or your kids are undisciplined, it because you are acting like an idolater. But if you work hard, can be trusted with secrets, and can correct your kids, then you are acting like a follower of Jesus.

*9 Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars. <sup>2</sup> She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. <sup>3</sup> She has sent out her servants,*

*and she calls from the highest point of the city, <sup>4</sup> “Let all who are simple come to my house!” To those who have no sense she says, <sup>5</sup> “Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. <sup>6</sup> Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight.”*

Wisdom prepares a marriage feast of meat and wine. This meal is free. Isaiah 55:1 Wisdom invites everyone in the most public places to come to the party especially those who lack a heart and need a new one. The inexperienced are those who have not yet made a decision. Wisdom calls them to turn in at her house, come to the party, eat her feast, and drink her wine. (see Matthew 22 and Luke 14).

Wisdom is not just offering food and drink. Like Jesus, she is offering herself as food and drink that brings life. Accepting this invitation entails repentance (i.e. turning from your simple ways), receiving life and walking in the way of your understanding. In essence, what Wisdom is saying is, “Repent of your foolishness, come to my party, marry me, and I will make you all wise, and give you an abundant and eternal life. You will live wisely if you know me.

#### How You Act Reveals Which Invitation You Accepted

*<sup>7</sup> Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults; whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.*

*<sup>8</sup> Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you; rebuke the wise and they will love you.*

*<sup>9</sup> Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still; teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.*

The party you choose to go to determines how you act in daily life. Whether you act wickedly or wisely reveals which party you chose. Belief always determines behavior, but behavior reveals what you believe. This is a worship issue.

Here is wise teaching. Do not correct a mocker because you will just get hurt. Correcting a mocker is a waste of time because he will not listen to you. It will have no effect on him. All you will receive are verbal attacks from him. There are some who never listen to wise counsel and will never humbly submit to authority. On the other hand, you should correct a wise man. He will love you for it and he will become wiser. A wise man is humble enough to know that he needs correction.

People do not usually live or die because of only one decision. They develop a pattern of life that ends in either death or life. Proverbs helps us see the outcome of these styles of life. If a person is open to God and teachable, he will become wise, but if he does not accept this instruction and closes his mind, he becomes a fool.

The person who tries to help a fool by correcting him will get no honor from the fool. The fool's folly has closed his mind to correction. Matthew 13:12-16

A wise man will continue learning from God all of his life. ( [2 Peter 3:18](#))

*<sup>10</sup> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. <sup>11</sup> For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. <sup>12</sup> If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.*

Do you have any relationships where someone has the freedom to ask you tough questions? Wisdom is the ability to hear and respond correctly to criticism so that you do not repeat the same mistakes.

If you cannot accept a rebuke, it is not just because that is your personality type; it reveals idolatry in your life (perhaps worship of self). If you are stingy, it reveals an idolatry of money. If you have a porn addiction, it reveals you have an idol of sex. If you cannot discipline your children, it might reveal that you have made your kids an idol. There is no secular and sacred divide in life. Covenantal faith will lead to righteous behavior. It is not just a character flaw but it is a spiritual problem. You are responsible for how you live.

The follower of Christ can also be helped by fear. We are challenged in the Scriptures to a reverential fear of God, which is the best type of fear that there is. It causes us to be concerned about disobeying Him or living in opposition to His ways. It's being in awe of our great God, bowing to His perfect will, and seeking His wisdom for living. To that end, the proverb declares, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding"* ([Pr 9:10](#)). By fearing God rightly, we can live wisely in an uncertain world.

### Reject the Deadly Invitation of Folly

Proverbs 9 is a strong statement of individual responsibility. It stresses that the person himself or herself is the ultimate loser or winner in his or her decision to choose wisdom or folly.

*<sup>13</sup> Folly is an unruly woman; she is simple and knows nothing. <sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, <sup>15</sup> calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way, <sup>16</sup> "Let all who are simple come to my house!" To those who have no sense she says, <sup>17</sup> "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is*

*delicious!" <sup>18</sup> But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.*

Turning away from Wisdom is characterized as unfaithfulness to God. Folly is loud, seductive, ignorant and lazy. She will produce the same characteristics in her followers. She invites everyone to her party. Her meal is illicit. Her water is stolen and her bread is to be eaten in secret. She is not just offering food and water; she is offering herself as food and drink. Sexual sin leads to abandoning God. Foolishness is in not seeing the connection between your actions and their consequences. Like a cow walking into a slaughterhouse not knowing that you are about to become a filet mignon. Her guests do not realize that they are accepting her invitation to their own funeral.

A foolish woman is blind and without reason, ignorant of divine things. She is in direct opposition to Wisdom, or Christ. She is "foolish". Her mouth speaks great words of vanity and blasphemy, boastful about her miracles, wealth, and riches; in an effort to draw others to her.

She does not know God, is without the fear and love of him, and faith in him. Nor does she know Christ, and the way of righteousness and life by him. She does not know the Gospel, its doctrine; its ways, worship, or ordinances of God.

Proverbs 9 is the story of Wisdom sending out her servant to invite us to a party that begins life instead of death. Jesus is the wisdom of God and he invites us to a meal as well. Those who eat this meal—feast on Christ's flesh and blood—will live and be a part of his kingdom. Christ's meal is not for those who think they are wise. It is for those who know they are fools and who want to grow in wisdom.