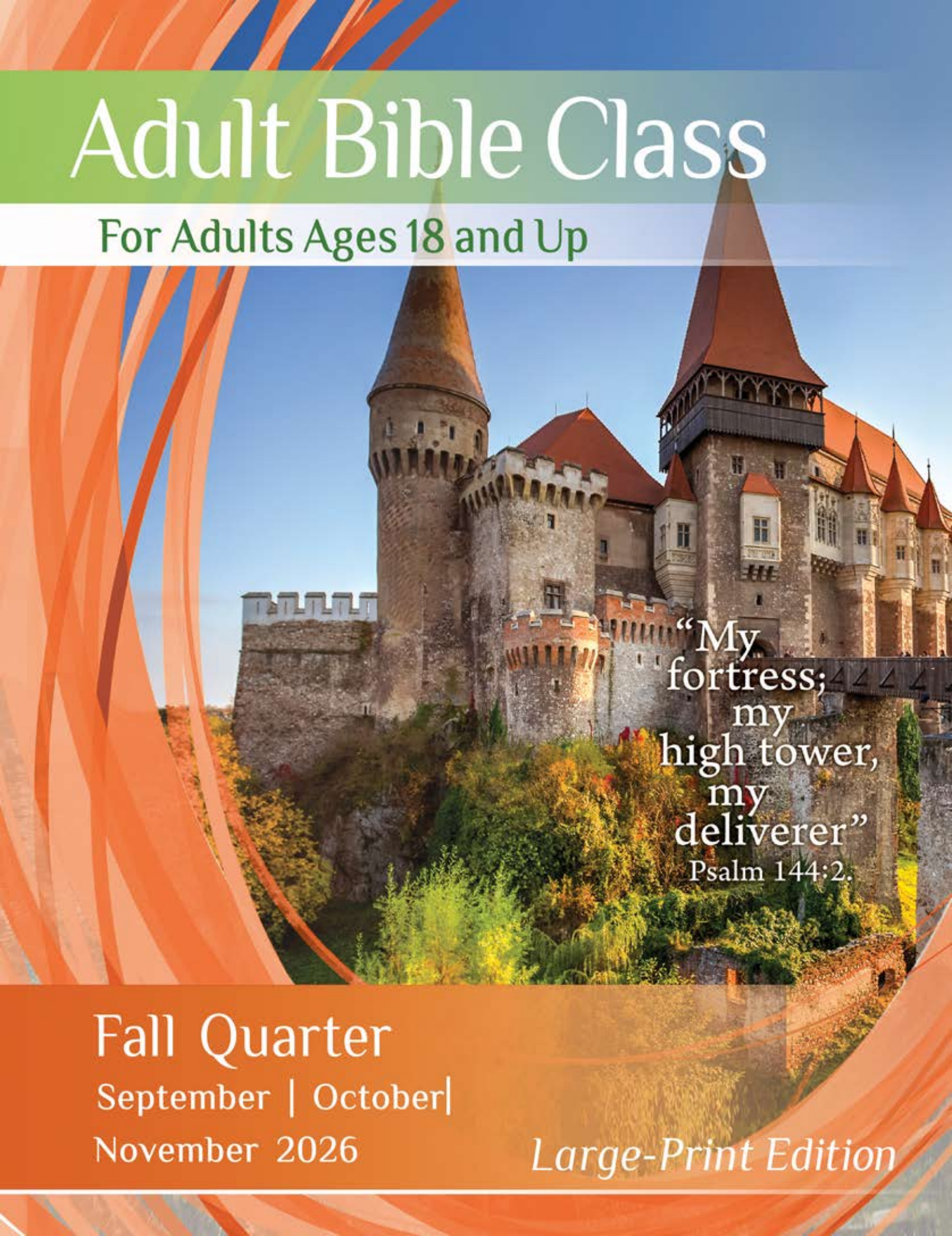


Adult Bible Class

For Adults Ages 18 and Up



“My
fortress;
my
high tower,
my
deliverer”

Psalm 144:2.

Fall Quarter

September | October |

November 2026

Large-Print Edition

Adult Bible Class

Large-Print Edition

FALL QUARTER

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Edited and published quarterly by

LIFESTONE MINISTRIES

UNION GOSPEL PRESS

Rev. W. B. Musselman, Founder

ISBN 978-1-64495-996-1

Abundant Wisdom

BY GLENN WEAVER

This quarter, we will engage in the pursuit of wisdom. Before we look at wisdom, however, our first unit will first look at the way of the fool as a cautionary exercise.

True wisdom comes from our Creator. Humanity's fall into sin affects our pursuit of wisdom in the same way it affects our pursuit of God. We begin by seeing how wisdom, personified as a woman, cries out in the street to all who will listen (lesson 1) (Prov. 1:20-33). She is especially concerned with fools who despise her teaching. They are on a destructive path, ignorant of their ultimate destination, yet all the while they scoff at sound advice. Wisdom is not a lady who will wait forever—if her advice is scorned too frequently, it may become too late to benefit from her wisdom.

Many people seek and trust in wealth rather than wisdom. They are fools, every one of them! So proclaims Psalm 49:1-20 in lesson 2. Riches cannot hold back death's cold grasp. As their lives slip away, so also will their riches go to other people. Only trust in God can deliver one from death.

Folly has a voice too, and she has misguided many lost souls to follow her destructive paths. Agur, an unknown, humble man, offers his observations on the matter (lesson 3) (Prov. 30:1-14). His humility has led him to see God's role in wise living. Following God and His Word is the path of wisdom. Only by focusing on pleasing God can one attain fulfillment in life.

Many people avoid the lessons Agur learned. It takes a proper heart and mind to accept wisdom's teaching instead of foolishness (lesson 4) (Prov.

14:1-19). There are many examples of destruction resulting from following foolish advice, but that does not deter the determined fool. Scorners will not find wisdom, and they will pursue their course until it leads to their death. The wise find success in their every pursuit, whereas the fool cannot succeed at relationships, business, and fulfillment in life.

Our second unit turns to the way of the wise, which offers a stark contrast to the first unit. This is not merely a difference in intellectual knowledge, but a difference in behavior as well. Wisdom is always applied!

Recognizing wisdom is not always easy, and wisdom may not be appreciated when found. Solomon told of a poor man who saved his city from a powerful king's attack through the man's wise counsel (lesson 5) (Eccl. 9:11-18). The poor man and his wisdom, however, were soon forgotten once the crisis was over and the city was safe. Solomon used this simple account to show that wisdom is more powerful than the skills, strengths, or riches that we usually rely on for success.

In lesson 6, Solomon explained in more detail that riches are a poor substitute for wisdom in Proverbs 22:1-16. Wisdom provides many things that riches cannot buy—a good reputation, a good sense of morality, and good friendships, among other good things. Conversely, relying on wealth rather than wisdom holds many dangers. It leads to bad relationships, a bad work ethic, and bad business deals. Ultimately, it may lead to turning from God and suffering His judgment.

Who among us does not need insight to deal with relationship problems? Proverbs 15:1-15 (lesson 7) provides valuable wisdom for handling the internal and external issues we face frequently—including, especially, God’s thoughts on such dealings. Even suffering God’s temporary reproof is the path of wisdom for those who learn from it.

Contrary to what is often presented by the world, the path of wisdom is tread by the meek (lesson 8) (Jas. 3:13-18). Those who reject meekness find envy and strife, not the way of peace. God provides peace for those who find and follow His wisdom.

If we were to conduct a survey to find where in the Bible we would discover wisdom, many would say the book of Proverbs. The greatest expression of God’s wisdom, however, is found not in Proverbs but in the gospel. First Corinthians 1:18-31 (lesson 9) explains that the wisdom of God is in the gospel: Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection. He is the power and wisdom of God that leads to salvation.

Our final unit turns to wisdom’s reward. Are the benefits of wisdom worth all the effort? The answer is resoundingly yes, as the benefits are tremendous! Wisdom is more precious than great riches.

To find wisdom for daily living, we must search for it as we would a precious treasure (lesson 10) (Prov. 2:1-9). When we begin with a heart open to God and His wisdom, we will find God and His knowledge.

At no time in our life are we most tempted to abandon wisdom as when facing a trial. God knows us well; He will provide all we need when we lack direction (lesson 11) (Jas. 1:1-11). If we expect Him to give an answer, we need to come to Him in faith. Living without faith in God is not living as a Christian.

The good news about seeking and finding God’s wisdom is that it leads



to blessing (lesson 12) (Prov. 3:13-35). Wisdom is not just about avoiding evil people, overcoming relationship issues, and making wise financial decisions. Wisdom provides a life that is long, pleasant, and peaceful. It leads to safety, security, and happiness, and it gives hope for the future. Wisdom comes from God and leads to God as the source of all our needs. We can trust Him to lead us in the proper paths for His glory.

Through Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, and Jesus’ death and resurrection on our behalf, God has made great blessings available to His children that we can know only in part on this side of heaven. We have everything we need to live a godly life that reflects our new life through Christ (lesson 13) (2 Pet. 1:1-11). We undergo sanctification as God works in us to conform us to Jesus’ image. We can overcome the corrupt and wicked lifestyles that grip unbelievers in sin’s grasp. The path of God’s wisdom provides patience, godliness, and love in every situation.

The source of wisdom is Jesus Christ. By obeying Him, we have abundant wisdom for our daily needs.

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

PROV. 1:20 Wisdom crieth with-out; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

NOTES

Wisdom Calls the Foolish

Lesson Text: Proverbs 1:20-33

Related Scriptures: Proverbs 5:7-14; 8:1-36; 9:1-12;
Isaiah 3:9-15; Jeremiah 6:16-21

TIME: between 971 and 931 B.C.

PLACE: Jerusalem

GOLDEN TEXT—“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets” (Proverbs 1:20).

Lesson Exposition

Throughout Proverbs 1 through 9, readers meet four characters or types of people. The first is the book’s implied speaker: an experienced wise person.

Next, Proverbs features an inexperienced person growing in wisdom. The inexperienced need humility and correction, but they have begun to heed the invitation to wisdom throughout the book.

The main character of our text is the simpleton. This person is described in Proverbs 14:15 as inexperienced. Proverbs 19:25 holds out hope that the simpleton can turn to wisdom. Simplicity does not mean complete ignorance but gullibility.

Finally, there is the fool. Fools in Proverbs have turned their backs on the fear of the Lord consistently (cf. 1:7). Today, the word “fool” connotes ignorance. In Proverbs, the word often means a deep, settled disposition of opposition to God (cf. 14:9).

THE SIMPLETON’S INVITATION— Prov. 1:20-22

A gaggle of simpletons moved through the street, on to the town center, and then walked by the city gates. (City gates functioned as a city hall at

that time.) Suddenly, jarringly, a woman’s voice shattered the city’s white noise.

The woman called to the unsuspecting simpletons. She did not mind that everyone was staring because the simpletons’ destiny rode on whether they took her wisdom to heart.

Proverbs uses the literary device of personification to display different life paths. Lady Wisdom invited readers to learn from her experience in chapters 1 and 8. Another persona enters in chapters 5 and 7. In contrast to Lady Wisdom, Lady Seduction invited people to follow their desires into a life of short-lived pleasure.

Lady Wisdom ignored marketplace protocol and made a racket. Solomon used four terms in verses 20-21 for how she raised her voice: a ringing cry, a loud noise, a cry, and a speech. She might be ignored, but she would be heard.

Lady Wisdom was a master teacher. Beginning in verse 22 she asked a series of rhetorical questions. Her questions began the same way that suffering psalmists started their laments, asking, “How long?” She was not mocking the simpletons, but wanted them to see where their path of indifference led.

First, Lady Wisdom asked about their affections. Why did the simpletons love gullibility? Were they tired of being so easily molded in the world's hands? Then she asked about their arrogant speech and their distaste for learning. They were like curably ill people who hate medicine.

THE SIMPLETON'S OFFER—

Prov. 1:23

Lady Wisdom sounded an alarm. When the word "reproof" occurs in Proverbs, it often focuses on the discomfort of being rebuked. At best, Proverbs 29:1 says people bristle at reproof. At worst, Proverbs 5:12 shows that people hate being rebuked.

Lady Wisdom wanted simpletons to know the payoff if they were willing to be corrected. What did the simpleton need to do to receive these riches? Lady Wisdom used one of the Old Testament's most common words for responding to God. Prophets used the word "reproof" hundreds of times. Lady Wisdom urged the same thing: turn from sin and folly and turn to God.

THE SIMPLETON'S WARNING—

Prov. 1:24-27

It was not too late for the simpletons to turn, but they had stiff-armed Lady Wisdom in the past. She extended a helping hand, but the simpletons ignored it. The simpletons were tolerant of many things but not of Lady Wisdom's rebukes.

Her outstretched hand would not be unlimited, though. A storm was coming. Final judgment is certain, and the book of Proverbs warns of earthly consequences for foolishness.

Lady Wisdom's judgment is stirring. One of her judgment words in verse 26, "calamity," also describes falling on hard times in Proverbs 27:10. Another of her judgment words used in 1:27, "distress," is from the same Hebrew root word translated in 11:8 as "trou-

ble." Like the early signs of a tornado, the simpletons created conditions that later would cause horror. Lady Wisdom knew that today's fun and mischief would unexpectedly turn to tomorrow's terror.

Lady Wisdom was more interested in truth and life change than in politeness, so she warned that when the storm came, she would laugh. Laughter and judgment seem a strange pairing, but God's laughter in the Old Testament is associated with judgment.

For example, in Psalm 2:4, God laughs at nations who think they can derail His Son's kingdom. Lady Wisdom's laughter is borne not of hatred but rather of the unshakable conviction that willfully rejecting the Lord's wisdom is a ridiculous decision.

THE SIMPLETON'S REGRET—

Prov. 1:28-31

The simpletons were a mysterious bunch. At some point, they crossed the point of no return and became recalcitrant fools. The fact that Lady Wisdom was appealing to them means that they were not yet beyond hope. But Lady Wisdom knew the danger of repeated, unrepentant sin. At a certain point, it would be too late. Psalm 95 attests to this reality when the psalmist says to listen to God's call to repentance today. A day will come for simpletons when there is no time to turn around their lives, their relationships, or their reputations.

While God's forgiveness can be received by faith up until one's last breath, as in the case of the thief on the cross, that does not mean the damage of a lifetime of foolish living can be undone (cf. 2 Chr. 33:13-17).

Lady Wisdom painted a grim picture of reversed roles. She called, and the simpletons ignored her. They would call to her one day, and she would rebuff them. The simpletons could not blame her when judgment came.

Proverbs 1:7 reveals the core issue: simpletons do not fear the Lord. In this verse we read that fearing God is foundational for a life of wisdom. Psalm 130:4 declares that fearing God flows from receiving God's forgiveness. The fear of the Lord bundles repentance, trust, and reverence into one powerful phrase. Those who fear God are in awe of Him.

Simpletons are in danger of making bad decision. Fools are those who have gone down a path that rejects God and refuses to fear Him.

Lady Wisdom moved from a storm metaphor to a feast metaphor. Rejecting her invitation set the table for the simpletons' eventual banquet of all the mockery, pride, selfishness, and carelessness that they had sown throughout life.

THE SIMPLETON'S DESTINY—

Prov. 1:32-33

Lady Wisdom invited the simpletons to turn to the fear of the Lord in verse 23. If the simpletons decided to turn away from the fear of the Lord, they would die. Eventually, indecision becomes a decision, and simpletons find themselves turning their backs on the fear of the Lord. That leads to death. Lady Wisdom surprised the simpletons with a note of hope.

Whoever would merely listen would have life. It sounds so simple, but turning, trusting, obeying—all of this is wrapped in one word, "hear." Deuteronomy 6:4-6 famously uses the term to call Israel to respond to the Lord. To truly hear God's Word is to respond (cf. 1 Sam. 15:22; Matt. 11:15).

No wonder Lady Wisdom promised so much to the one who heard her. Rather than death, the listener would receive life. She described the listener's life as firm, solid, confident, and secure. "Security" here does not refer to a life free of suffering but to

the steadiness that comes from trusting God. Wisdom then described the listener's life as at ease and free from fear of disaster. Again, this does not refer to a pain-free life but a life that does not fear the judgment of God or the fallout of bad decisions.

The unperturbed stability of the listener is the exact opposite of the fearful dread of disaster described in Proverbs 1:26-27. Ironically, the simpletons sought ease with their lackadaisical approach to life and God, but instead they forfeited the peace available through submission to God.

—Matthew Swale

QUESTIONS

1. Who are the four main characters in Proverbs 1 through 9?
2. How does the way Proverbs uses the word "fool" differ from the way people use it today?
3. How are wisdom and folly personified and contrasted?
4. How did Lady Wisdom begin her speech in Proverbs 1:22?
5. How did Lady Wisdom want her hearers to respond?
6. What is certain for those who reject God's wisdom?
7. Why did Lady Wisdom laugh at those who refuse to listen?
8. What transforms someone from a simpleton into a fool? Does this happen suddenly or over time?
9. What did Lady Wisdom call simpletons to do?
10. What is ironic about the eventual fate of the simpletons who refused to listen to Wisdom?

—Tom Greene

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Wisdom can be found almost anywhere by those who are willing to listen (Prov. 1:20-21).
2. We should be concerned about those who make unwise decisions (vss. 22-23).
3. We should not ignore wise advice from others (vss. 24-25).
4. Destruction often comes unexpectedly, like a whirlwind (vss. 26-27).
5. If one ignores the way of wisdom, one may have no help in times of trouble (vss. 28-30).
6. Foolish living often comes to a fitting conclusion (vs. 31).
7. Living for ease and prosperity leads to downfall, unlike the way of wisdom (vss. 32-33).

—James Frohlich

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is the fear of the Lord so important in pursuing wisdom?
2. How does it feel to have someone reject your hard-earned wisdom?
3. Have you observed the wise walking securely and simpletons worrying about the fallout of their destructive way of life?
4. Has anyone ever given you advice or correction that helped you grow in wisdom?
5. Have you ever witnessed someone reject advice or correction, then later seek help from friends or family and not receive it (cf. Prov. 1:28-30)?
6. Have you ever realized a lack of wisdom in your life? What did you do about it?

—Matthew Swale

Golden Text Illuminated

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets” (Proverbs 1:20).

The image of wisdom crying out in the streets is a powerful, urgent one. True wisdom comes from God. Proverbs tells us, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (9:10). Wisdom honors God and is reflected by a life that acknowledges His authority over all areas of life. This wisdom is a transformative force in our lives.

In Solomon’s time, people often conducted business publicly at the city gates, where there would be many witnesses (cf. Ruth 4:1-13). The public nature of wisdom’s call reminds us that God’s invitation to growth and transformation is open to all, not just to the elite or the specially educated.

Responding to wisdom’s call requires repentance. We see this illustrated in the life of David. When confronted by the prophet Nathan about his sin with Bath-sheba, David responded with genuine repentance. His heartfelt cry, recorded in Psalm 51:10, reflects the transformative power of godly wisdom: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

As we heed wisdom’s call and submit to her teachings, she transforms us. Paul described this process in 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

So, when we hear wisdom crying out through Scripture and through godly counsel, let us respond with open hearts, allowing God to conform us into the image of His Son.

—Gene Kissinger