

Proverbs 9:1-18

~ My Son... Choose This Day Whom You Will Serve ~

Introduction

Lisa Pepe is **NOT** a Biblical scholar...

She is **NOT** a theologian – she **doesn't write** for any kind of Christian organisation...

She is a **self-proclaimed** culinary expert who deals with beauty, wellness, and cultural lifestyle trends...

Her aim (according to her Subtask account) is:

To highlight connections between food, beauty, and community, delivering stories that inform, educate, and inspire her audience...

She also makes **plant-based** beauty products which **tells you** pretty much **everything** you need to know!

I **don't** follow her social media – I do **NOT** read her blogs or insights on beauty – but I **did discover** an **article** she wrote in 2023 – titled:

The Art of Food Presentation...

Here's what she says on the **Chef & Rare.com** website – she says:

*Eating is a multisensory experience. Long before a delectable bite ever touches our tongues, **our eyes** set the stage, building anticipation and guiding our taste experience. For the culinary enthusiast, the art of plating **isn't just about** aesthetics; it's about **telling a story** and enhancing the flavours of each ingredient...*

She says:

*You don't have to be a Michelin-starred chef to master the art of food presentation. But with just a few **tried-and-true techniques**, your home kitchen can rival the plating of your favourite upscale eatery. And here is how to do it...*

The article goes on to speak about:

- Sketching your dishes
- And having a plan of attack when plating your food
- Colour is key
- Play with the textures
- Mind the white space
- Sauce with purpose
- Garnish thoughtfully
- Stay authentic

You know all the things **you're thinking of** when plating up your children's favourite meal on a Tuesday night **at home!**

Food

Everyone understands that an **important element** of food is **NOT just** the way that **it tastes** – but also the way that **it looks!**

You can have the **most delicious/ 5-star** Michelin-quality meal sitting at your table – but if you're eating food that **looks like** it came from a **dog's breakfast:**

It's probably **going to ruin** your experience!

This is why for instance at a **wedding** – people don't just serve you **steak smoothies** that you drink through a straw (though that does sound somewhat nutritional) but they go to **a lot of effort:**

Making the steak look good – adding fancy potatoes – overpriced veggies – and **certain sauces** that you cannot pronounce because they're **all in French!**

It all goes together for the ultimate culinary experience!

Because eating food (whether we like it or NOT) **is an experience!**

There is a **logical/sequential** order of food to the way that it **looks & tastes!**

Table

And of course, the table itself needs to look appealing – the people need to feel welcomed – the drinks **should match** the occasion of the meal:

If you're having **steak** – then you're probably having a **red wine!**

Or if you're having **pasta** – something like **white wine!**

Or if you **don't drink** – you might just pick your favourite milkshake or soft drink!

But the point is – all food has a purpose!

All food **has** structure & logic **to a point!**

And all food ultimately needs to **NOT just** taste good – but it needs to **look appealing!**

Proverbs 9

Well, here in Proverbs chapter 9 we come to a:

Similar kind of **culinary experience!**

A similar kind of **invitational setting!**

A similar kind of **feast** being held by **2 significant women!**

The first is **held** by Lady Wisdom – and she sets her feast in **verses 1 to 6:**

And her banquet is a **banquet of joy!**

It's a **banquet of hope!**

It's a banquet that leads **to eternal life!**

Folly

The other is a party **being held** by **Madam Folly** – and her feast is verses **13 to 18!**

And her feast promises pretty much the **same thing** as Lady Wisdom – however her feast is a **banquet** leading to death!

And so **both** of these parties are **occurring** at the **exact same time!**

Both of them invite the simple and the fool **to come** and to **dine!**
And both **promise to deliver** high quality food that leads to eternal life!

Only one of them though is actually **telling the truth!**

Only one of them is **actually** able to **deliver!**

Only one of them will give you the **soul satisfying joy** that comes through faith in Jesus Christ!

No neutrality

And so the point **is to highlight** the middle section in **verses 7 to 12** which is getting you to choose between one of **these two competing women!**

It is getting you to choose one of these **2 competing feasts:**

The feast of Lady Wisdom – or the feast of Madam Folly!

Because here's the point:

Neither of them can be ignored!

Neither of them can be overlooked!

All of us must **ultimately choose** which party/ or feast we're going to attend!

And you **cannot be neutral** when it comes to picking a **feast** – if you chose to ignore the one:

Then you have to **decide for** the other!

Scripture does NOT give us the **option of neutrality** – Scripture says:

By **NOT choosing** the one – then you **have to dine** with the other!

And our decision [Solomon says] **will affect** the way that we do everything else in this world!

Our decision will have a **lasting effect** – a permanent result on the life of faith that we live here on the earth!

Main Point

And so point of Proverbs 9 is to get you to see that:

The life of blessing consists in dining with Lady Wisdom – but the life of death is at the banquet hall of Folly...

The Feast of Lady Wisdom [1-6]

Our Response to the Feast [7-12]

The Feast of Madam Folly [13-18]

Proverbs 9

So Proverbs chapter 9 – beginning at verse 1:

Wisdom has built her house; she has carved out her seven pillars. ² She has prepared her meat; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. ³ She has sent out her female servants; she calls out from the highest points of the city: ⁴ “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here!” To the one who lacks sense, she says, ⁵ “Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine I have mixed. ⁶ Leave inexperience behind, and you will live; pursue the way of understanding.

⁷ The one who corrects a mocker will bring abuse on himself; the one who rebukes the wicked will get hurt. ⁸ Don’t rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; rebuke the wise, and he will love you. ⁹ Instruct the wise, and he will be wiser still; teach the righteous, and he will learn more. ¹⁰ “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is

understanding. ¹¹ For by me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. ¹² If you are wise, you are wise for your own benefit; if you mock, you alone will bear the consequences.”

¹³ Folly is a rowdy woman; she is gullible and knows nothing. ¹⁴ She sits by the doorway of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, ¹⁵ calling to those who pass by, who go straight ahead on their paths: ¹⁶ “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here!” To the one who lacks sense, she says, ¹⁷ “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten secretly is tasty!” ¹⁸ But he doesn’t know that the departed spirits are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Opening Gambit

Proverbs 9 is **in many ways** a summation of the first 8 chapters of Proverbs!

It brings in many ways a conclusion on what has **already been** in **chapters 1 to 8** – and gives further insight of what is **going to come** in chapters **10 to 31**:

Things like friendship & finance – family & affection – labour & theology – the things of Kings and the sovereignty of God – how you engage with your money – your neighbour – your finance – raising godly offspring – trying to be a better Christian:

Every part of your life & where you are heading is in **a lot of ways covered** in the book of Proverbs!

And although we’re probably **NOT going to be able** to deal with **every topic** that is spoken of in **this middle section** – it will hopefully **whet your appeal** to go through this book **by yourself** and study these **overly repetitive & sometimes confusing** aphorisms we find in 10 to 31!

Billy Graham

Billy Graham years ago said that:

He reads a chapter of Proverbs **every single day** coinciding with the **date of the day** that it is!

So if it’s the 2nd of August – Proverbs chapter 2!

3rd of August – Proverbs chapter 3!

4th of August – Proverbs chapter 4!

And so on!

Obviously if there are only 30 days in that month – you just read an extra Proverbs for that month **but you get the point!**

If you do that **every single day** for the rest of your life – you’re gonna be a **very wise and well thought out** Christian!

Proverbs 9

– But in order to get there – in order to get to the **nitty gritty** of the Book of Proverbs – we first have to deal with:

These **2 competing women** – these **2 competing paths** – these **2 competing worldviews**:

The Path of Lady Wisdom – or the path of Lady Folly!

And so chapter 9 is this **pivotal chapter** in the entire Book as it serves (as I said) as:

A **summation** of everything that **goes before it** – and a **preview** of everything that’s **going to come!**

And so here in this **final appeal** from a father to his sons **is this** beautiful/ poetic/ Hebraic arrangement:

The feast of Wisdom & the feast of folly are being **set before you** with the **summary of instruction** presented in these middle verses to get you to choose **the right kind of woman!**

Point 1

And so we begin in point 1:

The feast of Lady Wisdom

Wisdom has (according to verse 1):

***Built** her house – she has **established** her home – she has **carved out 7 pillars** – she is preparing a royal feast!*

The idea here is that:

Lady Wisdom is **NOT** lazy!

She is **NOT** sitting idle!

She is **NOT** like Madam Folly who (**verse 14**):

*Sits by **the doorway** of her house!*

But this Lady **gets to work!**

This Lady is **busy!**

She's **industrious!**

7 Pillars

And her **first project/** her first **order of business** is to **carve out:**

7 pillars!

Now there is **all kinds of conjecture** about what the **number 7** is:

7 pillars – 7 days of creation – 7 sections of the Book of Proverbs – or the 7 speeches that the Father has given!

All of them are guess-work – all of them are **conjecture** – none of them are **concrete** or **satisfying!**

But I think the **best guess** of the number 7 has to do with **the size & the scope** of Wisdom's home!

We know from ancient archaeological digs that houses in these days (**in Ancient Israel**) when it came to **the rich/ and the wealthy** – **many of them** had had **7 pillars/ or 7 stone columns** supporting a portico which was a kind of **porch/ or a walkway** leading up to the home!

And so:

7 being the Hebrew number for **perfection**:

It seems to be a **refence to the size!**

Her house is **established** – her house is **completed!**

Her house is **fixed** & is **NOT going anywhere!**

Comparison

And so **consider wisdom's** home with Madam Folly – verse 14 where:

There is **no description** of Madam Folly's home – except that it's **merely a doorway!**

We don't know if it's completed – we don't know if it's finished – but it seems to be:

Somewhat of a shoddy shack!

Lady wisdom's home is a **mansion** – Madam Folly lives in a **shack!**

Lady wisdom's home is **expansive** – Madam Folly's home is simply **embarrassing!**

It doesn't even compare!

Royal feast

And so Solomon says that:

This house is **reflective of** the feast!

Madam Folly serves – verse 17:

Stolen water & secret bread!

Lady Wisdom prepares a feast!

Wine

She has (verse 2):

Prepared her meat; and she has mixed her wine...

Literally she has **slaughtered her beasts** and is preparing the best wine/ the choice wine!

One pastor says:

With Lady Wisdom you will get a hearty meal that sticks to your ribs!

Wine as you know is associated in the bible with **gladness** – and **fullness** – and **abundant joy!**

Psalm 104:15 says:

God has given wine to gladden the heart of man!

And when God has conquered His enemies on the earth and brings salvation **to the ends of the earth** – Isaiah 25 verse 6 says that:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of rich food & aged wine!

The Best Way

And so the idea is that:

If you **decide on** Lady wisdom – if you decide on **dining at her banquet!**

You'll **NOT only get** the right way – but you'll **get the best way/** you'll get the **joy way!**

The way that leads **NOT only** to eternal life – but **eternal joy!**

And this is a lie that the enemy has been **selling** and **twisting** ever since the days of creation!

Ever since the **days of the Garden** back in Genesis 3 – Satan has **come into the world** and said:

Did God really say?!?!

Did He really say He was good?!?!

*And did He **really promise** the best kind of way?!?!*

And here in Proverbs 9 – Solomon says:

Hands down – that's **exactly** what is on offer!

That is exactly the **kind of life** that God will deliver!

If you choose the right kind of lady – you'll **NOT only get** eternal life but the **kind of life** that leads to:

The fullness of Joy!

The gladness of heart!

And eternal life!

The way that **truly satisfies** the **heart & soul** of man!

David says in Psalm 63 verse 5:

*My soul will be satisfied as with **fat and rich food**, and my mouth will praise you with joy as I sit on my bed!*

This is the **7-pillared house** that Lady wisdom builds of **abundant & eternal joy!**

Verse 3

And so this is **the message** that goes out **all people** in verse 3:

She has sent out her female servants; she calls out from the highest points of the city.

Whoever is inexperienced, enter here!"

To the one who lacks sense, she says, ⁵ "Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine I have mixed. ⁶ Leave inexperience behind, and you will live...

Remember this is where **wisdom calls** throughout the book of Proverbs – this is where she **raises her voice** – this is the **best place** for people to hear from the **heights of** the city:

She's preaching in the market in chapter 1!

She's preaching at the gates in chapter 8!

But now in chapter 9 she's **sending out her servants/** her female companions to **procure the guests!**

She is **NOT delegating** her call of wisdom to other people – but she is **so concerned** that her call goes to all people that she has **personally sent** her female servants to **every single house!**

Guest List

Now **if wisdom** is the most **sought out** commodity in all of the world – if it is the **most desirable** attribute – the **very truth** of God's mind given to man – then:

Who **ought to be invited** to a party like this!?!?

I mean who would **you want to come** and **to attend** the party of Lady Wisdom?

Because I think **most of us** are **NOT inviting** the people in our lives that we **normally talk to** in a regular week!

Most of us would **NOT invite** the arrogant/ and proud/ and obnoxious people **at our work – in our street – in our lives – or near our homes:**

In fact **most of us** would invite the normal – the dignified – the straight kinds of people who we highly respect!

But NOT so with **Lady wisdom** – we see who are the **top priority guests** – verse 4:

⁴ “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here!” To the one who lacks sense, she says, ⁵ “Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine I have mixed...

The Simple

And so the call of Lady wisdom **doesn’t go out** to the **elite** – or to the **noble** – or to the **well-dressed people** of this world – but instead her call goes out:

To the Simple!

The stupid!

The Naïve!

Or the way the CSB puts it:

The inexperienced ones **of the world!**

Remember there are **3 categories** of people in the Book of Proverbs!

There is **the fool:**

And he’s the one who’s **hardened his heart** toward God!

He’s the one who walks the path of Folly!

He’s the one who’s walking in **direct rebellion** to the things of God!

And then you have – **the wise:**

They are the ones who've **committed their life** to God!

They walk in wisdom & **love correction** & discipline!

They are the ones **who obey** the laws of God & love the laws of God!

And then you have – **the simple:**

And the simple are **NOT** the intellectually dumb or stupid people of the world – rather they are:

The **morally dumb & stupid** people of the world!

So think of them like:

The open minded fools to everything

They are the **uncommitted people!**

Someone who agrees with everything and **is easily persuaded** by the worst of things – and so:

Someone comes along and **says something stupid** – and the simple say:

Well I agree with that – that sounds really good thing to me!

But then another guy **comes along** 5 seconds later and says **something completely contrary** to the first – and the simple say:

*Well I agree with **that** guy now!*

And then **another person** comes along – and they say something **completely contrary** to the **first** **two** – and the simple say:

Well I agree with that guy now!

Right I'm just **open minded** – I'm **just uncommitted** – I lust love being on the fence:

Now we used to be called **being stupid!**

But now we just call it "**progress...**"

And this is a value that the **world loves** to be aligned with – but something the bible **explicitly condemns!**

Because in the Hebrew conception of the Book of Proverbs where:

There's only 2 ways to live!

There's only a path **to life** & only a path **to death** – someone who's **open minded** about everything is making a terrible mistake!

Because it means that:

When you're open minded about absolutely everything – then you're basically going to **commit yourself to absolutely everything!**

And it means that any harmful thing that **enters your mind** can be taken as **absolute truth** because now you've **lost the ability** to discern between good & evil!

And that's a **really dangerous place** to be according to the Book of Proverbs!

Kinds of People

And yet those are the **kinds of people** that wisdom is inviting to her party!

The simple – the stupid – the lame – the open-minded fools of this world!

And the reason why Wisdom is inviting **these kinds** of people – is because these are the kinds of people that wisdom **loves to redeem!**

These are **NOT the kinds** of people that **you and I** would invite to a party like this – but they are **the kinds of people** that Jesus came to save!

The ones who need to have their **minds renewed/reshaped/ and refashioned** by the word of God!

One pastor says that:

Wisdom's guest list is so provocative – because these are the people who need the feast she's offering!

Gospel Demands

And see this is where a lot of **young/cool/hip/** and **modern** churches go **terribly wrong** in their **application** of the gospel!

Because they understand the **first part** – they understand **the call** – they understand the **wide-net** of the gospel:

But the **application of it** goes terribly wrong!

Because **once you come** into the presence of Lady Wisdom – once you come **into contact** with the holiness & the purity & the righteousness of God – the bible says that:

You cannot remain there!

You cannot remain in that state!

You cannot remain simple!

You cannot **remain indifferent** to the gospel's call!

The gospel demands that you **come as you are** – but you **cannot remain** as you are!

Matthew 16:24 – Jesus says:

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me!

So the invitation is **open to all!**

The invitation is given to all!

But the application of the call is absolutely NOT – it's NOT open to interpretation):

Let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me!

Paul says something very similar in Titus chapter 2 when he says that:

The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all men (or all kinds of people) –

But then he says that:

*This grace is **training us to renounce ungodliness** and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives...*

And so the gospel demands that yes you are free to come and fellowship with Jesus – but **once you come** into the presence of wisdom – then you **cannot remain** in your foolish/ sinful/ and unrepentant state!

Because the gospel demands everything

And this is **the call** of Lady Wisdom's feast:

Come **as you are** – but remain as **you are NOT!**

Madam Folly

And it's a radically different call to Madam Folly – we see in verse 13 the feast that Madam Folly is offering!

Verse 13:

Folly is a rowdy woman; she is gullible and knows nothing. ¹⁴ She sits by the doorway of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, ¹⁵ calling to those who pass by, who go straight ahead on their paths: ¹⁶ “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here!” To the one who lacks sense, she says, ¹⁷ “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten secretly is tasty!” ¹⁸ But he doesn't know that the departed spirits are there, and that her guests are in the depths of Sheol...

Now the first thing I want you to notice is **how deceptively similar** this feast is to Lady Wisdom:

Both women are **calling to** the people of the city!
 Both women are **calling people** from their **homes**!
 Both are calling to the **simple** & the **naïve**!
 Both are calling from the **highest part** of the city!
 Both offer food!
 Both offer satisfaction!

And this tells us **something profound** about the **nature & reality** of our sin when it is presented to us:

Sin **always presents itself** as imitating truth – but delivering death

All Sin is in **many ways** a distortion of the truth!

All sin is a distortion of a good gift that God gives!

And this is what makes sin **so deceptively powerful** in our temptation – sin is a distortion of **a good gift** that **God gives**:

So **lying** is a distortion of the **good gift** of **truth**!

Murder's a distortion of the **good gift** of **life**!
Adultery's a distortion of the **good gift** of **sex**!
Anger is a distortion of the **good gift** of **joy**!
Greed is a distortion of the **good gift** of **giving**!
Pride is a distortion of the **good gift** of **glory**!

So **every single gift** that God has given to us in this world – sin comes along and tries to distort it!

And this is the tactic of Madam Folly!

She imitates the way of Lady Wisdom – because **otherwise** she's got **nothing else** to offer!

Unhelpful

Verse 13 says:

Madam Folly is a rowdy woman; she is gullible and she knows nothing...

In other words:

Folly calls out to the **same people** – in the **same city** – at the **same location** as Wisdom – but:

*this woman is just as **gullible** – as **simple** – and as **stupid** as everyone else!*

One **lady** is **able to deliver** the simple from their ways – the other:

Can only share in their **problems**!

Which means that Madam Folly in **no position** to **be able to help** any of these people – because:

She acts just like them!

Lazy Vs. Active

Verse 14 says:

She sits by the doorway of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, calling to those who pass by, who go straight ahead on their paths...

Madam Folly is a **lazy woman**:

She's Idle!

She's Loud!

She's Boisterous!

She's Bawdy!

She **doesn't bother** to **actually go to** the people of the city **to help them** – she **simply sits there** and yells at them **from a distance!**

Wisdom on the other hand works!

She is characterized by all of these **active verbs**:

She has built!

She has carved!

She has slaughtered/ or prepared!

She has mixed wine!

She has set her table!

She has sent her servants!

Everything about **this woman** when it comes to the **wise & attractive** life is **NOT** even in the **same postcode** as Lady Wisdom!

Tactic

And so knowing this then – **the tactic** of Madam Folly is to target **NOT just** the simple/ the stupid/ the naïve passing by – but verse 15 says that:

*She calls to those on the **straight paths ahead!***

That is she calls to:

*The righteous – **upright** – and the **wise people** on the paths!*

You see the devil – sin – temptation & folly **love nothing more** than to see a **young righteous person** (a man or woman of faith) being corrupted to the paths of death!

It is the devil's **primary aim** to corrupt the pure & the innocent ones of this world!

Water/Bread

And he does that through Madam Folly's Feast – notice verse 17 & the **stark difference** in meals:

Lady Wisdom is preparing an **epic feast** of meat/wine/music & merriment – Madam folly is serving **stolen water/** and **secret bread** – which many have taken as a **euphemism** for sexual sin & promiscuity!

Remember **stolen water** was **the image** in Proverbs 5 for adultery:

*Drink water from your **own cisterns/** and water from your **own well** of marriage!*

And **bread** of course was **the image** back in chapter 6 of:

The thief stealing bread to satisfy his hunger!

And so both of these images relate to the utter destructive **nature & character** of Madam folly – which is why he says in **verse 18**:

Her house leads to death – her house has departed spirits – her guests are in the depths of the grave!

Wisdom Works

And so the lesson that Solomon is **driving home** to his sons in this final section of the first 9 chapters is that:

Wisdom is **NOT something** that you simply fall into!

Wisdom is something **that works** – wisdom is something **that labours** – it is something that needs to be **sought after!**

Folly

But folly **on the other hand** is the **natural disposition** of the human heart!

It's the **natural tendency** of the **human life!**

Solomon says that:

In order to become the fool of the Book of Proverbs – all you **need to do** is to:

Simply just **sit there!**

Just lie there!

Just be lazy!

Just be arrogant!

Simply just coast in the life that God has given!

Folly **doesn't** work!

Folly **doesn't** labour!

Folly **doesn't think** or prepare for the time ahead!

She simply **sits there & imitates** the way of the world!

Masking herself in wisdom – but producing nothing but death!

Wisdom is a **blessed lady** who produces life – but folly is a lazy woman producing death!

And so too those who dine at her feast!

Point 3

And this is why Solomon in this **final section** verses 7 to 12 implores his sons:

To make their final decision

Are they going to choose Lady Wisdom – or will they choose the feast of Madam Folly!

Verse 7:

The one who corrects a mocker will bring abuse on himself; but the one who rebukes the wicked will get hurt. ⁸ Don't rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; rebuke the wise, and he will love you. ⁹ Instruct the wise, and he will be wiser still; teach the righteous, and he will learn more...

Which Feast

It's a bit of a tricky passage to understand at first reading – but **the basic gist** is that:

How a person responds to the call of Lady wisdom **will determine** the **feast** they're going to attend

When teaching comes to the scoffer Solomon says:

He will get dumber because he hates rebuke!

But when teaching comes to the wise man:

He will get wiser because he loves rebuke!

The way that you respond to the call of wisdom when it comes to you in the gospel – will determine whether you live the **life of faith** or the **life of folly!**

And the reason is – because:

Wisdom – & correction – discipline – & instruction are **all ways** that Lady Wisdom builds her home in this world!

They are tools on the tool-belt of Lady Wisdom for her to **multiply her beauty** in the hearts of those who **attend her feast!**

Proverbs 1:7 says:

Fools despise wisdom and instruction...

Proverbs 15 verse 12:

Mockers hate to be corrected, and they avoid the wise person...

Proverbs 12 verse 1:

Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge – but the one who hates correction...is stupid!

Wise

And so:

The wise man (verse 8) loves **correction & discipline** **NOT because** discipline & correction are **sweet at the time** – but because **those things** (those tools) are the ways that Wisdom makes the **wise-man wiser!**

These are tools that God uses to:

*Oppose the proud and give **grace** to the **humble!***

Jesus says in Luke 14:11 that:

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted...

And James likewise said in James chapter 4 that:

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble...

And these are all things that Solomon echoes here in Proverbs chapter 9:

Instruct the wise man, and he will become wiser; and teach the righteous man, and he will learn more in understanding...

The point is that:

Even though correction never seems pleasant or enjoyable **at the time** of our correction – the **true child** of wisdom (the true child of God) **ultimately knows** that God is **using that trial/** using that **pain/** using that **difficultly** to bring them closer to His throne of grace!

Because he knows that this is **the sphere** in which God chooses to grow His kingdom people!

This is how God refines His kingdom people!

It's how **He transforms** the fool – and it's how He grows the humble:

And how **all wisdom** in this world comes about!

Verse 10

And so ultimately Solomon then **ties it back** to that principle we've seen at the centre of it all which is:

The Fear of the LORD!

Verse 10:

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

So this is the **starting point** of knowledge!

This is the **starting point** of wisdom!

Solomon keeps linking these 2 principles together – because:

These are the marks of the entire Christian life!

Someone said that:

*The fear of God & the knowledge of God is the **greatest arena** of learning & wisdom that you could ever undertake!*

Stay Grounded

And so it's **almost as if** Solomon here in this **final few verses** is reminding us **right before launching off** into the chaotic part of:

Chapters 10 to 31!

Solomon is saying to us:

Do **NOT get lost** in the minutia & the finer details of the Book of Proverbs but remember **the main point!**

Remember that the Book of Proverbs has **eternal consequences/** and **eternal ramifications!**

This is **NOT just** a book on:

How to be better mother!

Dad!

Husband!

Father!

And how to have better marriage!

Better friendships!

Better wallets!

Better homes!

Better cars!

All those things **will come** in the book of Proverbs!

But **the main reason – the main point** for Solomon writing this book is to remind us of what Jesus said all throughout His earthly ministry – that:

There are **only 2 ways** to live!

There are **only 2 paths** to take!

There is the wide road or the narrow gate!

The path of wisdom – or the path of folly!

And you **cannot ignore** one of those 2 paths – if you have NOT chosen the path of wisdom then you **are walking** the path of folly!

No one can serve 2 masters – no one can attend both feasts!

Either you will **love the one** and **hate the other**; or you will **serve the one** and **despise the other**!

And so:

How a person **ultimately responds** to correction & discipline from Lady wisdom – will determine the **general life direction** that that person takes!

Conclusion

And so the question is friends:

When it comes to **Lady wisdom** knocking on your door – **correction** knocking at your home – **discipline** coming into your life:

When a brother or sister comes to you about your sin – your folly – your foolishness!

Or when a pastor & elder corrects you about a particular habit!

Or when your children approach you about your anger & your rage!

And your **lack of holiness** as a parent!

Do you ultimately welcome that correction – or do you despise it?!?!

Do you accept the love & discipline of Lady Wisdom **through the mouths of:**

Infants & babes!

Family & friends!

Brothers and sisters in Christ!

Or do you despise the Fear of the LORD?!?!

Do you reject the wisdom of God?!?!

And do you enjoy eating stale bread & stolen water?!?!

Because Solomon says that:

How you respond to **correction & discipline** through the voice of Wisdom that comes in your life
will determine which feast you're **drifting toward!**

Which banquet you're going to attend!

Where you will spend eternity!

It reminds me of what C.S Lewis said many years ago – that:

We are far too easily pleased...like that of half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us in God, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased..."

So that's the offer – you can either spend your days playing with mud pies in the slum of Madam Folly or:

You could have the joys of eternal life in Jesus Christ today and on into eternity!

Thomas Brooks was a Puritan pastor **who spoke much** on the topic of sin & temptation in the life of the believer...and in his excellent book titled:

Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices...

He writes this striking paragraph **in which I paraphrase** – he says:

Someday you will see sin for what it truly is – when its robes are ripped off; when its mask is pulled off. You saw it one way, but someday when everything is made right, you'll see it for what it truly is. And it will make you so nauseous and sick to know how deceived you were – and to know how broken your definition of beauty really was...O souls! the day is at hand when the devil will pull off the paint and garnish that he has put upon sin, and present that monster in such a way that your thoughts will be troubled, your face will change, your joints will loose, your knees dashed together, and your hearts will be so terrified, that you will be ready, with Ahithophel and Judas, to strangle and hang your bodies on earth, and your souls in hell, if the Lord has not more mercy on you than he had on them. Oh! therefore, look upon sin now as you must look upon it for all eternity!

This is what the book of Proverbs is trying to get us to do – to look upon sin in all of its disgusting vulgarity and folly and to see that the only option is the path to life!

And Solomon says:

My Son... choose this day whom you will serve but know this your choice is forever!

Let's pray!

Proverbs 9:1-18

Discussion Questions

[Read Proverbs 9:1-18].

Main Point: *The life of blessing consists in dining with Lady Wisdom – but the life of death is at the banquet hall of Folly...*

Q1. What is the main message of Proverbs 9? – How does all of Proverbs hinge on this passage? – In what ways have you encountered the invitations of Wisdom and Folly in your life? – What are some ways for us to identify/hear Wisdom's voice?

Q2. [Read verses 1-6 & 13-18]. – Note all the similarities of Wisdom & Folly's feasts? – Does this teach us anything significant about the nature of sin/temptation? – Can you think of examples in the world where sin presents itself as satisfying but leads to ruin?

Q3. Note what kinds of people Wisdom invites to her feast (verses 4-5). – Why is that significant when it comes to our understanding of the gospel? – Why is verse 6 also important for understanding gospel fruit?

Q4. Why is it impossible to remain neutral between Wisdom and Folly, according to Proverbs 9? **[See also Matthew 6:24; 12:30; John 3:18; James 4:4].** – In what ways does our culture try to make neutrality seem virtuous? – Why is neutrality ultimately futile?

Q5. [Read verses 7-12]. What is the main difference between a wise person and a fool, based on how they respond to correction? **[See also Proverbs 1:7; 12:1; 15:12].**
– How do you typically respond to rebuke or critique? – Does this encourage or discourage you? – How can we get better at responding to God’s discipline/correction?

Q6. How do we grow in our cultivation of Wisdom? **[HINT – See verse 10].** – Thomas Brooks says one day we’ll see sin for what it truly is. What helps you to see sin more clearly now—and hate it rightly?