

THE CALL OF WISDOM

Tuesday, November 11

Reading: Proverbs 1:8-33

Proverbs 1:20 *Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square; 21 on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech:*

Proverbs 1-9 are a plea from a father to his children to follow the way of wisdom. “Listen” is more than just hearing these instructions but also means to obey them. That “your mother’s teaching” is mentioned is significant. Every culture in the ancient world had wisdom literature, but they never mention the role of the mother. Women were thought unimportant. However, from the godly Hebrew writers we see that the mother’s influence on her children was just as important (and sometimes more important) than that of the father. In chapter 1, we see two contrasting calls on a person’s life.

CALL OF PEER PRESSURE (1:8-19) – One of the strongest enticements we face is wanting to be part of “the in-crowd.” Their call of “Come along with us” promises that you can belong to their club. We can almost hear the teenager today say, “But everyone else is doing it!” in these words. They promise excitement (1:11-12), easy money (11:13), and the camaraderie of being one of the gang (1:14).¹ What they don’t tell you is that this way ends in death. Even a bird has enough sense to avoid an obvious trap. But not these “sinful men.” What they had planned for others will come back to get them (1:16-19). The advice is to stay as far from such people as possible (1:10, 15).

Too often we try to see how close we can get to the edge without falling over. We want to go as far as we can without actually falling into sin. However, God’s wisdom says to stay as far away from sin as you can. “Do not give in to them...Do not set foot on their paths.” The closer we get, the easier it is for us to fall into temptation’s trap.

CALL OF LADY WISDOM (1:20-33) – Here wisdom is pictured as a woman crying out in the streets. Words of wisdom should not be hidden in schools and churches. Lady Wisdom cries out in the public square and at the city gate where everyday life and business took place. It is an urgent call. It is a call for people to “repent” and turn back to God’s wisdom for living. But people refused to listen (1:24-25) and chose to ignore the fear of the Lord (1:29). Because they reject wisdom’s call, she will reject them. When the inevitable disaster strikes, it will come when they least expect it (1:26). It will blow them away like a storm or whirlwind (1:27). But by then it will be too late (1:28). They have brought this tragedy on themselves and only have themselves to blame (1:31-32). But wisdom’s final cry gives hope for the one who listens and obeys. They need not fear the disaster that strikes the obstinate and wicked people of the world. They are safe in the arms of God.

This picture sets up the contrast of choices we all must make: Either to fear God and follow His wisdom or be foolish and live for ourselves and our own desires. Are you listening to Lady Wisdom’s call? Are you living for the Lord or following the crowd and listening to the world’s call?

¹ Kenneth T. Aitken. Proverbs (The Daily Study Bible series), p. 19