



Lesson 3 June 20th, 2020

The Gifts of Wisdom

Study Scripture – Proverbs 8:8-14,17-21

Background Scripture – Proverbs 8

Key Verse:

“Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”

Proverbs 8:10-11

INTRODUCTION

Our Study Lesson now forces us to look exactly at what a “**gift**” is. Some people say they like the idea of receiving a gift when it's a birthday gift or a wedding gift or whatever the occasion is that introduces the act of making a gift. But let us note very carefully that the “**gifts**” that our Study today involves not only physical gifts but spiritual gifts. We are therefore now examining the needs of human beings that completely transcend the “desires of the world”.

The dictionary tells us that a gift
is something given willingly to someone without payment: a present.

A gift is really an act of charity or philanthropy. It is a grant, a boon generously bestowed. It is really a godsend.

In other words, we are dealing with divine matters. We should therefore shift our thinking to a completely different level if we are to get the benefits of the “**gifts**” that wisdom brings.

This new level of thinking or focus should not really surprise us for we know that the very matter of salvation which we have received is a gift from God. It is not something that we can work for, or something that we deserve. At the matter of fact we do not deserve salvation anyway for we are born as enemies of God. Yet because of the inexplicably mysterious nature of “divine grace” we have been shown mercy and brought into covenant relationship with God when we have accepted the blood offering of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

It is also important to note that **wisdom** who has brought these **gifts** is pictured as **Lady Wisdom** who stands and cries out in the marketplace, on the streets, on the entrances to the city, at the gates of the Temple, in high places by the way where the paths meet and everywhere that people gather or traverse.

It is therefore absolutely impossible for human beings not to be exposed to the call and the **cries** of wisdom. No one can stand before God in the Day of Judgment and say that God has not spoken to them of sin, righteousness, and judgment and showed them the way to escape the judgment of death and separation from the Lord God.

Lady Wisdom is pictured as crying out aloud, urging men and women to listen to what she has to say and to turn away from the path of destruction on which they are traveling.

In a patriarchal society it is interesting to see that **Lady Wisdom** does not stay at home in a secluded place of privacy, but is willing to be out on the streets, displaying immense sensitivity to the needs of men and women and children. Maybe God needs the cries of the clearly rather feminine **Lady Wisdom** to get children, men, and women to listen since they all have ignored the other calls that they have heard.

As you study make sure that you notice that **Lady Wisdom** is presented as a complete contrast to the other woman in the book website entity and secretly seeks to turn people away from the right way of living, leading them astray. But **Lady Wisdom** is pictured as being totally different from that “other woman” who is really only a seductress. That other woman is a picture of Jezebel.

Her cries are urgent and compelling. Like a mother she is enthusiastic in implying that people can change and do what is right. She does not lament but praises God, His creation, and humanity. She looks at humanity, the world, and God and delights in all of them. So she calls out to men and does not stop calling and crying out. She's like a human mother who in this personification pursues her erring child inviting them to engage with her in a joyful search for God's dynamic presence.

She well knows that the world of Facebook has all those myriad appeals to capture the unwary who do not know that that is the way of death. So she offers flourishing life and an alternative vision side-by-side with the visions presented by the world. She knows that the young as well as the old have to develop discernment and the ability to listen to competing voices and to know how to choose the wiser course.

Notice therefore that **Lady Wisdom** brings gifts that you do not have to work for. She gives them to you and encourages you to take them so that you will have a good life and so you will have blessings galore.

Remember and note therefore that these are blessings and gifts that are given by the divine. She is desired because she is beautiful, and she is desirable and alluring because her strength and her sense of justice produce better than material riches.

Wisdom is according to Scripture the attribute of God along with knowledge and understanding so that it is talking to us about God and His ways. God has graciously allowed us to have some, a little bit, of His infinite possessions.



It might be helpful for us to list only a few of the gifts that wisdom brings. She brings

- the ability to reject naivety and foolishness
- to understand what is excellent and precious
- the ability to become shrewd
- the ability to possess princely virtues. This involves the gift of being a wise ruler or Administrator.
- the ability to see and understand wickedness, crooked and perverse things which is an abomination
- the ability to obtain and possess the knowledge so that one would see the invisible and elusive things in nature but will not only possess those in nature that are right but will possess the wealth that is available. This is the kind of real wealth which is more valuable than silver and fine gold and rubies. This is durable wealth and righteousness.

None of these immeasurably valuable things are things that you can work for and claim that it was your ability that brought them to you. They are given to you. The only one that really possesses these gifts is God, the Lord God Almighty, the covenant keeping God.

The Book of Proverbs accordingly presents 'wisdom' as a gift from God and as an invaluable asset to successful living. The word 'righteousness' invariably appears where 'wisdom' is discussed, and this underscores its divine origin.

Understandably, therefore so that we can understand, wisdom is personified in Proverbs as a beautiful and desirable lady, whose affections bring blessings and goodness on all sides. But beyond this depiction of wisdom and even though God is all-wise, Proverbs still links wisdom with God in a very intimate and intriguing way.

We must remind our readers again that this gift from God is an unimaginably valuable treasure. There is nothing like it. Silver, gold, or precious gems are of little value compared to this gift from God.

It is critically important to remember that wisdom always existed as an attribute of God and as such predates creation. We are therefore encouraged to listen to the cries of appeal from wisdom, teaching us to choose her way.

In reality wisdom is the only meaningful thing that there is and it is presented to us in such a way that it should be everyone's guide. The things that seem real to us are, generally speaking, deceptive and destructive illusions. It however is very difficult for us who have gotten accustomed to the sin nature to come to grips with the fact that everything we see around us, the material things that we so treasure, the style of life that is so attractive, the goals that the world constantly pressed us to accept, is just not right, and leads to death rather than to life. Wisdom has been given to us to sort out for us the true from the false.



The writer sets forth the 'how to' instructions for practical daily living, and certainly 'wisdom' is best demonstrated in the choices that one makes. The good and the bad are presented in a myriad of situations with their respective results and all the time the reader is exhorted to choose the way of wisdom.

Wisdom is a virtue and beneficial to all who will apply it but there is a big difference between worldly and divine wisdom. While both deliver a variety of rewards to their practitioners, only the latter points the way to eternal life. Very early into the book of Proverbs it is evident that divine wisdom is the issue for the writer.

The Old Testament presents wisdom as given meaningful skill in life. Sometimes we find that the word wisdom refers to any educated discipline or skilful performance. In Isaiah 10:13 the word is used to describe successful military leadership. In Exodus 35:26 it is used to describe skill in making call out goat's hair, while in Exodus 31:1-5 it is used to describe skill in metalworking and carpentry.

We are looking at a gift from God which brings discipline, as well as skilful performance in anything that has to be done. The Book of Proverbs gives us multitudes of direction, comparisons, and illustrations, drawing on things of nature and things encountered in everyday life, so that we can see how necessary and attractive Wisdom is.

In today's Study lesson the writer goes beyond 'wisdom' as a virtuous, beneficial and attractive asset and delves into how wisdom in its personification, actively appeals to and seeks to engage all mankind. In doing so we are invited to make observations about Wisdom itself, and not simply restrict ourselves to wise observations about life brought because of our engagement to wisdom.

Still in light of its inseparable and somewhat mysterious link to the Creator God (verse 22-31), it is not really surprising that 'Lady Wisdom' makes strenuous efforts to turn men to the way of wisdom and life. After all, it is the will of God that all men be saved! But not only is it the will of God that all men are saved, but we are shown that God takes the initiative to seek men out. The stress is on the activity of our God. He just does not sit still, and watch the world go to hell in a hand basket.

Importantly, 'Lady Wisdom' does not wait for people to chase after her, but like the Old Testament prophets confront people in their daily lives as they go about their business, meeting them wherever they assemble to do business and to enjoy themselves and issues her invitation, making her sales pitch.

It is important to recognize the stress on the two ways of life. They are really only possible choices that men can make. Chapters 8 and 9 present personifications of two apparently attractive ways of life, but it makes it clear that one way leads to life, while the other way leads to death.



The latter part of the chapter though not in our Text (vs. 22-31) opens an interesting window on the source and origin of wisdom. Here personified wisdom is an active participant and seeming partner with God in creation and so much so that some believe Jesus Himself is in view. Undeniably the terminology used in this chapter regarding wisdom has its full and complete meaning only in, *'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God'* (1 Corinthians 1:24).

What is certain is that infinite wisdom is an active attribute of the Creator God and this fact should not be lost on those who hear the appeal in verses 1 through 5.

Our Study Scripture is placed in a chapter which defends wisdom as a most important thing to have.

It argues that wisdom is so important that it should be the guide for every single person.

Second it is pictured as something that is essential for morality and righteousness.

Third, having wisdom is said to be the key to having everything that is necessary to succeed in life. It is really the key to success, for bringing both material and immaterial benefits.

Very importantly, wisdom is said to actively seek out people and is available to those that seek it. Note that it is not something that one can inherit.

But note also that it is not purely an intellectual exercise for it is like a mother's love inserted directly in the midst of people and so is accessible and desirable for all men.

THE TEXT

Verses 1-4. Wisdom cries out to people and this is an essential part of her ministry. This type of activity of course has implications which it would be wise for us to consider. Wisdom does not warn so much about particular dangers, but her cry is really about offering opportunity to men, opportunities which will lead to life.

She is for ordinary people and so she operates at street level. She does not operate only in academia or in the Temple, or where the wealthy and the intellectuals are. Wisdom is zealous. To counter the works of Satan who does not sleep, she does not sleep. She is no shrinking violet. She does not wait for people to come to her but instead she goes to them, especially when they are about their normal business and they are busy. She especially targets the naïve and foolish who are not inclined to listen.

So she makes it plain:

The precepts of Wisdom should be known, and so much so that they should be declared loudly. She must cry and put out her voice. The need for her instruction is great, and the dangers facing the foolish and the young are very great, so she has to be aggressive in competing for the heart and mind of all men, especially of the young.



The very public pleas are in contrast to the adulteress of chapter 7 who lurks in the streets after dark, to ensnare the unwary with her fleshly enticements. Wisdom does not employ stealth nor speak in whispered, seductive tones under the cover of twilight and darkness. She proclaims her message at the major intersections, at the *gates of the city* and openly in the public streets.

So she stands on high, at the top of the places where the roads meet and the paths cross, where people are bound to gather. The crossroads are very important, for these are exactly where people come to see the latest styles, to find partners in life, to make deals, to get the latest information.

But note that she also cries at a coming in at the doors, which means that she goes to and cries at the entrance of the doors of every house in the town. This is specific attention to every individual, leaving out no one, and not to allow anyone to say that they did not hear her cry and her offer of opportunity.

Note that God cares about every single individual. He will leave no stone unturned to get those who have gone away from Him to return to Him.

Jesus manifests all the ideas of wisdom and He came to give all men without exception the opportunity to come to Him, to be saved, and to inherit eternity. It is sad that men will hear the cry of God and turn their backs to Him

Note Wisdom is a 'seeker'; she places herself where people concur, whether going in or out, up, down or across. The targets of her pleas are at one and the same time specific and general. She demands that all men of every class and condition, the high and the low heed her admonitions. Lady Wisdom is a symbol of the grace of God. God does not only offer invitation to His elect, but He offers His invitation to all men whether or not they will accept. He even sends His rain on the unjust, on those who are His enemies, those who will certainly refuse His invitation. That is the grace of God and this flows from the nature of God Himself.

Verse 5.

So wisdom makes it plain. She tells us what she's doing and where she's coming from:

Listen, for I shall speak normal things; and all of my lips will produce right things.

For my mouth will utter truth;

And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Wisdom now called out specifically to the simple ones, to the naïve, to the fools. These are the children that are still fighting with the affairs of life without any agenda. They are those with loose ends and will listen to any voice that speaks to them. They might have a vague belief in God but they are so careless that they live their lives apart from God's will and direction.

So **Wisdom** calls on them to have an understanding heart and understand the ways of shrewdness. This means that they must develop according to the Dictionary shrewdness which it defines as **the quality of having or showing good powers of judgment.**



This is also defined in the Dictionary as **astute or sharp in practical matters. Sagacious, perspicacious, astute means acute in perception and sound in judgment. Shrewd stresses practical, hardheaded cleverness and judgment.**

All believers must get or develop the qualities referred to above. This is more precious than gold. Believers should not live carelessly. When we do we can expect the difficulties we have in life. We often make it easy for Satan to buffet us. **Wisdom** says we do not have to live like fools or simple persons.

When sinners repent and turn to righteousness, then the simple understand wisdom.

In verses 6-21 the whole latitude of wisdom's desires, applications, virtues and benefits are repeated; as well its inextricable link to righteousness. Many of the traits of wisdom are attributes of God Himself.

Wisdom makes it clear that she is speaking to them about excellent and princely things. These are things that pertain to princes and princesses' things that are right and equitable. If you would therefore claim as some do that you are a King, a Princesses, or a Queen you must make sure that you are behaving according to the ways of **Wisdom** for if you do not you are denying what you're claiming for yourself.

Verses 6- 7. These excellent things spoken of by wisdom comes because from her lips, once they're open, will be sent forth right things.

We are assured that what is true will be spoken by her for wickedness is an abomination to her. If you have never looked carefully at what an abomination is let me quote to you the Dictionary meaning:

The noun *abomination* means anything or action that is vile, vicious, or terrible. The word abomination comes from the old French word "abominacion" meaning "horror, repugnance, disgust".

The words of **Wisdom** are therefore plain, true, and honest. They are reliable and totally opposite to wickedness and unreliability.

Verses 8-9. Everything that **Wisdom says** are spoken in righteousness which means that they are upright, are never crooked, never perverse. They do not come from a lying or deceitful tongue. She sees life and speaks from a perspective of righteousness.

Those who simply open their ears and listens to what she's saying will find that her words are really plain and easy-to-understand. As they listen her words will become more and more right to those who hear because they are finding knowledge. The hearts that were closed to God because of sin will come to a knowledge of truth once they listen to her. Those that are open to understand what **wisdom** is saying will find knowledge. God will give it to them as His gift.



When wisdom is grasped, and knowledge and instruction comes, there will be ever increasing possibilities for successfully steering through the difficult waters of life. Men are taught how to make life a success in the worldly sense. However, it is in the application of the principles of the true wisdom in the moral and spiritual phases of one's life, that by far the greatest rewards of wisdom are to be realized.

Wisdom describes herself as being inseparable from prudence, and therefore is closely tied to knowledge and discretion. She is so valuable that she enables those who follow her to come up with new things and practical solutions to the problems of life.

Wisdom makes it clear that the evil way is inseparably tied to a perverted mouth, arrogance, pride, and self-love.

The themes of the previous verses are again echoed here in this verse. It speaks to the character of God, about the way He is, how He operates and why as children of God, we should really trust in Him explicitly.

God is sovereign over all. Along with that we should understand that His word does not contradict itself at all, which connects back to the concept spoken about in this verse concerning righteousness. For if your actions, decrees or words contradict at any point, how can the character of righteousness be attributed to a person or their actions?

When wisdom speaks, it is true and nothing less than that. Lies are used by people to disrupt the truth, and as such those people should not be trusted with even worldly wisdom, or regarded as a source of wisdom. When true **Wisdom** speaks, it is for the sake of clarity, to edify. With that in mind its words will be plain and clear so that all can understand. Then the choice is upon the individual, for if they do not understand, the fault is not in **Wisdom**, but in the person's refusal to hear the wise words.

There is nothing of deception or error in the utterances of wisdom. What proceeds from her mouth goes directly out, and without circumlocution (a round-about way of speaking) directed to the right end for the intelligent, the knowing, straight or even, giving no occasion to stumble, removing the danger or erring for those who have obtained knowledge of good and evil, and thus the ability of distinguishing between them.

When we listen to **Wisdom** we are considered to be someone who is enlightened by the Spirit of God, who is a spiritual man or woman, that has discerning, and can be the judge of spiritual things. God expects His children to grow in knowing Him and what He stands for. He is also there to help in this endeavour.

In contrast to this is the carnal man, who will only possess a natural knowledge or earthly wisdom, which can never hold up to the wisdom of the Lord God Almighty!



The Bible is a sealed book to many, learned or unlearned; the mysteries or doctrines of the Gospel are hid in parables from such; but those to whom Christ has given an understanding to know Him, these know them, and they are plain unto them. For though there are some things hard to be understood in the Scriptures, as in some of the writings in Paul's epistles, and some sublime truths in the Gospel; yet those which are necessary to salvation are easily understood.

That faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, is a very plain one; and right to them that find knowledge; a spiritual and experiential knowledge of Christ and His truths.

Verses 10 & 11. Wisdom's value is above silver, gold, and rubies. Without wisdom, one may have the riches of this world and a miserable life. Early in his reign Solomon desired wisdom above all riches and was greatly blessed because of it.

From all this the writer infers that the right knowledge of those princely things, will transform us into the people of righteousness, which is to be preferred before all the wealth of this world. Receive my instruction, and not silver. Instruction must not only be heard, but received. We must bid it welcome, receive the impressions of it, and submit to the command of it; and this rather than choice gold.

We must prefer true religion before riches, and look upon it that, if we have the knowledge and fear of God in our hearts, we are really more happy and better provided for every condition of life than if we had ever so much silver and gold. Wisdom is in itself, and therefore must be in our account, better than rubies.

Wisdom will bring us greater gains; it will be to us a better portion. If we can sit down and wish for the wealth of this world, if we did get it, it would be unworthy to be compared with the advantages that attend serious godliness. We must be dead to the wealth of this world, so that we may the more closely and earnestly apply ourselves to the business of true religion. We must receive instruction as the main matter, then be indifferent as to whether we receive silver, gold or little. We must not chase after accumulating wealth and receive it as our portion and reward, as the rich man in his life-time received "his" good things.

Verse 12. There is some disagreement among scholars as to whether or not the Wisdom referred to here is Christ. The problem is that this is a personification. Some prefer to regard it as one of the attributes of God that God used in creation.

All the Attributes of God that we know of are not the whole of God. They cannot be easily separated for they all fit together perfectly. So let us understand that we do not know much about God. We cannot say that God is love alone for there is much more to God.

Scholars therefore teach that God is "simple", not made up of parts. He cannot be split up into pieces for all His virtues fit together as one.



But we do know that Scripture speaks of Christ as possessing the fullness of wisdom. It therefore is not the most important thing to argue about for we know that this is the truth of God presented in poetic form. Once scholar reminds us in a discussion of Proverbs 8:11: **“It is found in all manuscripts and versions, and Hebrew poetry has a habit of not falling into line with the structures that moderns expect of it. The use of wisdom in the third person, paralleling instruction and knowledge, was to be expected if Wisdom is to speak of wisdom. She is underlining her own worth in terms of her attributes. This also explains the unusual I, Wisdom in Proverbs 8:12. She has to indicate who the personal pronoun refers to precisely because of the variation in Proverbs 8:11”.**

You must remember that there is really no suggestion that wisdom is the origin of teaching, or creates or fashions anything for it is Yahweh who creates and fashions, and so **Wisdom pictures herself using a word picture** behaving as a kind of assistant.

We are told however directly that it is the second person of the Godhead namely Jesus who is the source of knowledge and wisdom and understanding and of who it is said as the **Word**, **“All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made”.** John 1:3.

So we know that Jesus was the Creator, not an assistant. Whatever attributes that are being discussed were really a part of Him, since He is God.

It is therefore most important that Christ be in the heart, not only Christ revealed to us, but Christ revealed in us. So here we further our understanding of the relationship between God and wisdom.

The phrase, taken both ways, shows that Christ is fully possessed of prudence; as a man that dwells in a house is the proprietor and possessor of it, so prudence is Christ's. It belongs to Him, He enjoys it; He dwells in prudence, and prudence dwells in Him; all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge are in Him, and the Spirit of Wisdom rests upon Him.

It shows that prudence is natural to Him, and not adventitious; it does not come from abroad, nor does He go abroad for it; He and Prudence are as it were born and brought up together in one and the same house: and likewise that there is an intimacy and familiarity between them.

Prudence is most present with Christ, is always in and near Him, and ready at hand to be exercised by Him; as it was when He was incarnate on earth; He "dealt prudently," as it was prophesied He should. Isaiah 52:13. This attribute appeared in His disputation with the doctors in the Temple at twelve years of age; by His prudent answers to the ensnaring questions of His enemies; and throughout the whole of His ministry, both as to the manner and matter of it and particularly at the time of His seizure, arraignment, trial, and crucifixion.

Wisdom, or Christ, dwells not with the wise and prudent of this world; nor with such who are so in their own conceit; but with such who are sensible of their folly; who are humbled under a sense of sin, and are made wise unto salvation; who believe in Christ, which is a point of the



highest prudence; and who walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise; such as these have the presence and company of Christ.

Christ, who is God omniscient, knows all that is in the hearts of men; all their thoughts, schemes, and devices. He found out, He scented the knowledge of them when here on earth; He was privy to the secret thoughts and wickedness of men's hearts; He knew all the hypocritical designs and views of the Pharisees, when they tempted Him with ensnaring questions; He was apprised of all the ways and methods they devised to take away His life before the time, and so escaped them;

He found out the knowledge of Judas's wicked scheme to betray Him, and spoke of it to him and others before it was executed; and He knew all the wicked devices and stratagems of Satan against Himself, in tempting Him in the wilderness, and in putting it into the heart of Judas to betray Him; and He knows all his wiles and artful schemes to decoy His people, and makes them known unto them, so that they are not ignorant of his devices. Christ, God has His people, and knows what is needed to secure them unto that day, when we shall all dwell together.

It is up to us, the children of God to recognize this and move within the knowledge, will and wisdom of God to be there.

Christ has full knowledge of the plan of salvation being in the bosom of His Father. Wisdom is shown in the design and execution of the Gospel.

The Gospel is an "invention," not of men, but of God; not a scheme and device of men, but of God; it is not taught by men, and learned of them, or of them only, but of God; and a "witty" one it is; it is the wisdom of God, the manifold wisdom of God, though esteemed foolishness by men. Christ has had full and perfect knowledge of wisdom and the plan of salvation; it is hid in Him, it came and was preached by Him, as it never was before or since; and He communicated, and still does communicate the knowledge of it; and blessed are they that know the joyful sound!

Verses 13-14. Wisdom now begins to focus on those who rule in this life. This is not simply talking about Kings and generals in an Army but it is also talking of what you need be aware of and to do, for you are the one who reigns in your life and you are in a position of dealing with the things in the world that you live in and that threaten you. **Wisdom** will give you what you need to protect yourself so that you are not forced into some activity that you know is wrong for you.

True religion, consisting in the fear of the Lord, which is the wisdom previously spoken too, teaches men to hate all sin, as it is displeasing to God and destructive to the soul. **Wisdom** teaches you giving counsel and sound knowledge. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil, the evil way, to hate sin as sin, and therefore to hate every false way. Wherever there is an awe of God there is a dread of sin, as an evil, as only evil. We as children of God must realize that God is holy, separate.



Because **Wisdom** gives understanding, this good understanding gives power for power belongs to **Wisdom**. For the individual, power, riches, authority, and everything else that one needs in life to succeed as a child of the King is available. In this environment one can deal properly with pressures, problems, and threats from within and from without. In discussing these skills that Wisdom gives, one writer states:

“Here then she speaks of those who respond to her. To them she gives counsel and sound knowledge in all that they do in war and peace, for basically she “is understanding”. That is her very nature. And she has might as revealed by her influence on Kings, rulers and governors. For by her Kings reign, princes decree justice, rulers govern, as do also nobles. She influences all the judges of the earth (and the kings and governors were the premier judges). Note the assumption that all who rule or judge wisely owe it to Yahweh and His wisdom. He disseminates it to all whose hearts are right and who seek it. There were very few rulers who were totally corrupt”.

Two common and dangerous sins such as conceitedness of ourselves, pride and arrogance, are sins which Christ hates, and so do all those who have the Spirit of Christ. This is what Christians must learn to see in others and hate that part in them, but we must also hate them in ourselves, to move us away from it. The froward mouth, peevishness towards others, God hates, because it is such an enemy to the peace of mankind, and therefore we should hate it.

But note carefully that **Wisdom** loves those that love her. If you love wisdom you will be loved by her. When you love her you will look for her and she guarantees that you will find her.

Christ, as God, has strength and wisdom; wisdom and might are His as Redeemer, He is the wisdom of God and the power of God. To all believers God is both strength and wisdom for in Him they are laid up for us that we may both know and do our duty. He is the Wonderful Counsellor and gives that grace which alone is sound wisdom. He is understanding itself, and has strength for all those that strengthen themselves in Him. True religion gives men the best counsel in all difficult cases, and helps to make their way plain. Wherever it is, it is in understanding that there will be strength. It will provide all that we that we need, both for services and to overcome sufferings.

The word of God in man makes a man perfect and furnishes him thoroughly for every good word and work.

Verse 17. Those that love **Wisdom** those that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity shall be beloved of Him with a peculiar distinguishing love: He will love them and manifest Himself to them.

They shall be happy in the success of their enquiries after Him. We are instructed to seek Christ early, seek an acquaintance with Him, and show interest in Him. In doing this the soul of that person who seeks God will be happy and wealthy in this world and the one to come. It echoes Matt. 6:33 in all its sentiments.



Those with wisdom will be hard-working and careful and do not waste their substance on foolish living. They will honour Yahweh with their substance and their barns will therefore be full according to Proverbs 3:9-10. Not all however even though they possess wisdom will prosper outwardly. They know that they will inherit an inheritance that is far better than that they can obtain in the world and they will live in security and quietly without fear.

Verses 18-21. Wisdom will not only make rulers wiser and have power and authority so that they would prosper. She also offers riches, honour and long-lasting prosperity to those who love her. They would gain the respect of their subjects and of all good men. This honour and strong respect will be long-lasting.

Clearly this is spiritual wealth for that is the only kind of wealth that would not be affected by moths, rust or thieves. **Wisdom** therefore brings also spiritual well-being and God's favour.

Note carefully that the promise is to those that walk in the way of righteousness and practice justice. When rulers walk in the paths of justice, responding to God's wisdom, they will enjoy the favour of man and God and will be rewarded with material blessings also.

Correspondingly, those that are with Christ will share in His wealth. That may be in the now or a time to come. Whether He will see fit to give them to us now must be referred to Him. When wisdom is bestowed upon a person in this world, the Wisdom that God grants are riches and righteousness, riches honestly got, not by fraud and oppression, but in regular ways. Riches charitably used, alms, are called righteousness. Those that have their wealth from God's blessing on their industry, and that have a heart to do good with it, have riches and righteousness.

The riches that the Bible promotes are durable riches. Wealth gotten by vanity will soon be diminished, but that which is well earned and deserved will wear well and will be left to the children's children, and that which is well spent in works of piety and charity put out to the best interest of others will be durable.

This is that fruit of wisdom which is better than gold, than fine gold and, it leads us in the way of righteousness, shows us that way and goes before us in it, the way that God would have us walk in and which will certainly bring us to our desired end. It leads in the midst of the paths of judgment, and saves us from deviating on either hand. Virtue lies in the midst. Christ by His Spirit guides believers into all truth, and so leads them in the way of righteousness, and they walk after the Spirit.

Those that trust in God's council shall be happy in the glory of God hereafter. Therefore Wisdom leads in the paths of righteousness, not only that she may keep her friends in the way of duty and obedience, but that she may cause them to inherit substance and may fill their treasures, which cannot be done with the things of this world, nor with anything less than God and heaven.



The happiness of those that love God, and devote themselves to His service, is substantial and satisfactory. It is substantial; it is substance itself. It is a happiness which will subsist of itself, and stand alone, without the accidental supports of outward conveniences.

Spiritual and eternal things are the only real and substantial things. Joy in God is substantial joy, solid and well-grounded. The promises are their bonds, Christ is their surety, and both substantial. They inherit substance; that is, their inheritance hereafter is substantial; it is a weight of glory; it is substance, Heb. 10:34. All their happiness they have as heirs; it is grounded upon their sonship.

It is satisfying; it will not only fill their hands, but fill their treasures, not only maintain them, but make them rich. The things of this world may fill men's bellies (Ps. 17:14), but are not their lasting treasures, for they cannot in them secure to themselves goods for many year.

Let the treasures of the soul be ever so capacious there is enough in God, and Christ, and heaven, to fill them. In Wisdom's promises believers have goods laid up, not for days and years, but for eternity; her fruit therefore is better than gold.

CONCLUSION

The personification of virtues is by no means unknown in ancient literature, and it is quite a stretch to say that the poetic personification in this case implies that Jesus, who is the sum of wisdom, was created.

The importance for us is that wisdom makes an impassioned plea and compelling argument for all men to embrace her ways and reap benefits in this life and eternal rewards in the life to come.

Her qualifications are impressive and impeccable, her handiwork as one of God's active attributes in creation and this speaks to her perfection.

Man continually strives for the secret to successful living and it would appear that since so few find it, it must be a secret. The real truth of the matter is however that wisdom, the very wisdom of God openly offers and pleads to all men to follow her ways, the way of righteousness and peace; the way that leads to eternal life.

But unfortunately men will not accept the invitation of the living God and so they will never find the secret to successful living.

We see wisdom first calling out to us, chasing after us. But then we see wisdom anxiously waiting for us to respond saying: *"Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my Gates, waiting at my doorposts"*.



What better reason to accept Wisdom's offer than that in Proverbs 8:35 *"For he who finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the Lord"*.

They are real dangers in this world, but God calls us to a life of joy, adventure, wonder, vitality, learning, and experiencing a world created by God and filled with His glory and His opportunities.

He has brought to us a life that is worth living, where we are protected both on the inside and on the outside, and so we can rejoice in Him and do His bidding.

Why would we not want favor with God? Why would we not want to go everywhere and live at every time with His approval, His companionship, and His "well done"? The invitation has been given and we beg you to respond positively, learn the lessons of wisdom and be changed, then possess the skills to live a successful life.

If you have come to Christ, and if you want wisdom, ask for it, and you will have everything that you need to make your life everything you long for it to be. Jesus desires you to grow in your faith, have life and favor with God, and to respond to the truth that Proverbs has set before us. The wisdom that created the world is offered to you.

Let us heed wisdom's call!

