

PROVERBS

When Wisdom Calls, Don't Be Left Out In The Cold

My family moved to the small desert village of Jahuara II, Mexico, in 1999. When we packed our bags to begin our new life as Mexican desert dwellers, we made a serious mistake. The villagers had told us during our visits that the winters in Jahuara II were cold enough for coats, gloves, and all of that “nonsense”, but we had always lived in Kansas and were used to the cold winters here. It was impossible for us to imagine needing warm winter clothing in a place we had found to be well over a hundred degrees! We assumed that the winter weather would seem pleasantly cool after an oven-like summer, so thinking there would be no need for our winter clothing, most of it found a place in our final yard sale. Off we went to Mexico, with plenty of t-shirts and shorts.

Summer dragged on like a fiery furnace. September wasn't much better bringing with it barely double-digit temperatures. The “chilly” winter could not come fast enough! By mid-October, we finally found some relief from the heat, and by mid-November, we were getting

concerned with how cold it was increasingly becoming! By December, we could see our breath inside our house! We reconsidered our situation and thankfully purchased some cozy coats and warm blankets.

Not everyone who ignores wisdom when it calls to them can correct their mistake by buying coats and blankets, and not every mistake made by those who trust their own flawed judgment will be as harmless as chilled feet and shivering teeth. Wisdom “cries out in the streets”—eagerly being offered to those who will fear the Lord and walk in His ways. Those who repent of their sinful stubbornness against Him will find life in the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He is “the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24), and in Him are hid “all the treasures of wisdom” (Col. 2:3). Those who do not turn to the Lord will find no mercy when they reap the everlasting consequences of their foolishness. We would do well to listen to Wisdom when she calls! Ignoring it will mean much more than being left out in the cold.



LOOK CLOSELY

observation

Proverbs 1:20-33 (NKJV)

20 Wisdom calls aloud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. 21 She cries out in the chief concourses, At the openings of the gates in the city She speaks her words: 22 "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, And fools hate knowledge. 23 Turn at my rebuke; Surely I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. 24 Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded, 25 Because you disdained all my counsel, And would have none of my rebuke, 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your terror comes, 27 When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you. 28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer; They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me. 29 Because they hated knowledge And did not choose the fear of the LORD, 30 They would have none of my counsel And despised my every rebuke. 31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, And be filled to the full with their own fancies. 32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, And the complacency of fools will destroy them; 33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely, And will be secure, without fear of evil."

What is your initial impression of this passage?

Mark "Wisdom" in v 20 and all the pronouns (she, her, I, my, me) that refer back to wisdom throughout the passage.

Mark what Wisdom does in vv 20, 21.

Mark the three different types of people mentioned in vv 22, 32.

Mark the command given by Wisdom in v 23.

Mark the offer of Wisdom in v 23.

Mark the words and phrases used to describe the rejection of Wisdom in vv 24, 25, 29, 32.

Mark the words that describe Wisdom's response to rejection in vv 26 & 28.

Mark the word *calamity* in v 26 and the synonyms of it used through v 27.

Mark the phrases that describe the reaction of the person facing calamity v 28.

Mark the words and phrases used to refer to the wisdom that has been rejected vv 29-30.

Mark what those who reject Wisdom eat and will be filled with in v 31.

Identification Key

Develop your own key for identifying the various words and phrases in the text provided. Use different colored pencils, circles, boxes, underlining, etc., but be consistent from week-to-week.

Mark the action of the simple in v 31

Mark the result of the simple's action in v 31

Mark the action of the fools in v 31

Mark the result of the fool's action in v 31.

Mark the results of those who listen to Wisdom in v 33.



THINK CAREFULLY

interpretation

“Wisdom calls...” The word wisdom is plural giving it added intensity. Wisdom is personified as a woman who is visibly and audibly calling out her words of wisdom to people daily in the public arenas of life. From the streets to the gates she is making her message known to all who hear her.

“...simple ones...” The simple are the naive and impressionable ones who are open minded to aberrant philosophies of life.

“...scorners...” Scorners are those who have gone deeper into sin. They treat God's counsel with contempt and mock His wisdom. They find great joy in scorning the truth of wisdom by their rejection of it.

“...fools...” Fools are those who are hopelessly entrenched in sin. They are the arrogant, conceited, and sinful ones who detest instruction and knowledge and want nothing to do with the wisdom that knowledge brings.

“...pour out my spirit...” The verb *pour* carries with it the sense of gushing forth like the waters of a flooded river. The spirit of Wisdom in the positive sense is understanding; Wisdom promises to lavish this spirit upon those who turn to her. The spirit of Wisdom in the negative sense is judgment; Wisdom promises to pour out judgment on those who reject her.

“...called...stretched out...” These are now past-tense verbs. The generous offer of Wisdom has been made but has been rejected.

“...calamity...terror...” The terror and destruction that comes is likened to a storm and a whirlwind. These disasters in nature come without warning and with devastating effects. The effects of rejecting Wisdom are harsh: calamity, terror, destruction, distress, and anguish. All these unplanned distresses come upon those who refuse Wisdom's invitation.

“...listen...dwell safely...” Listening to Wisdom here refers to a listening with the intent to follow what is heard. Those who listen in this way have a confidence that none of the consequences that fall on those who reject Wisdom will fall on them. Rather than destruction there will be safety. Those who listen to Wisdom also experience inner quietness and security instead of the emotional trauma that comes from the evil that befalls those who reject her.

Where does Wisdom cry in vv 20-21?

Since Wisdom makes her message known in the open, who has access to it?

In your own words, characterize those to whom Wisdom is calling. Is she calling to those who listen to her or to those who ignore and reject her in v 22?

Why is Wisdom calling to them?

What response is Wisdom looking for in v 23?

What are the benefits of receiving Wisdom?

Describe the consequences of rejecting Wisdom.

Why does Wisdom respond the way she does in vv 27, 28?



RESPOND WISELY

application

In what ways does Wisdom “call” to you?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:24 and Colossians 2:3. Where does Paul state that wisdom is to be found?

Read Galatians 6:7. In what ways does God use natural the consequences of our actions in our lives?

Describe how God’s wisdom protects us from calamity?

Share a time when you rejected God’s wisdom and the consequences of that choice.

For parents:

How are you a channel through which Wisdom “calls” to your children?

In what ways does teaching consequences for disobedience instill wisdom in your children’s lives?

How might reinforcing God’s wisdom in your children’s lives protect them from future pain?

In what specific ways do your children see that you are responding positively to God’s wisdom?