

PROVERBS: THE WAY OF WISDOM

LADY WISDOM & LADY FOLLY

Wisdom cries aloud in the street, in the markets she raises her voice. — Proverbs 1:20

Read: Proverbs 1:1-7, 1:20-33, & 9:1-18

Life is complicated. In our culture today, we have two very different voices calling out to us, competing for our attention and trust: Wisdom and Folly. These two voices have contrasting opinions on how we engage life, especially with money, sex, friendship, and work. Lady Wisdom invites us to center each of those things on God, while Lady Folly begs for us to center our very existence on those things. Lady Wisdom show us what life under God's authority looks like, while Lady Folly shows us what life under our own authority looks like. Folly lifts up man's "wisdom" as ultimate, seducing us to ignore God and follow our hearts. But Proverbs graciously warns us that the path of folly eventually leads to our demise.

Wisdom is rooted in the fear of the Lord. In short, fearing God is letting God be God, trusting that he does a better job at being God than we ever could. To fear God means to humbly submit our lives to him. The overarching message of Proverbs is that doing life God's way is the path to true joy and meaning. Money, sex, friendship, food, drink, work—these are all beautiful gifts from God. But these gifts were never intended to name us, define us, or complete us. Rather, they are gifts given by God to be used wisely. Through the book of Proverbs, the Lord gives us wisdom to navigate the complexities of this life.

Ultimately, choosing between Wisdom and Folly is much more than simply choosing how to live. It's choosing who to worship. In the ancient Near East, only one person had the right to dwell on the highest point in the city: the god of that city. Interestingly, Proverbs tells us that both Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly dwell at the highest point. So Proverbs asks each one of us: who will we worship? Will it be Wisdom or Folly? Will it be the God of the Bible or a god that we have created for ourselves?

Discussion/Reflection

We want to apply God's wisdom to transform how we think, feel, and act. The following questions are meant to stimulate conversation, correction, and change.

1. **In what ways do you encounter Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly in your day-to-day life?** Is there anything attractive or appealing to you about the path of folly? Is there anything unattractive or difficult about the path of wisdom?
2. **Think through a specific aspect of your life where you feel confusion, stress, uncertainty, or frustration.** What would it look like to "fear the Lord" in that situation?
3. **If the wisest person who has ever lived was alive today and eager to impart his wisdom to you, what would you do?** Would you ask for help? Thankfully, Jesus fits that description perfectly. As a group, spend some time praying for Jesus to give you wisdom and grace. Bring him your lack and receive his fullness.