

“Lord God, you have appointed me as a pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument -- but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

PROVERBS 9

¹Wisdom has built her house. She has carved out her seven pillars. ²She has prepared her meat. She has mixed her wine. She has already set her table. ³She has sent out her servant girls. She calls from the highest point in the city, ⁴“Whoever is naïve, let him turn in here.” To someone who lacks sense she says, ⁵“Come, eat my food, and drink the wine that I have mixed. ⁶Abandon your naïve ways and live. Travel the road to understanding ... ¹³The woman Folly is boisterous. She is deluded. She knows nothing. ¹⁴She sits at the doorway of her house, on a throne on the heights of the city, ¹⁵in order to call to those who pass by on the street, those who are simply going along on their way, ¹⁶“Whoever is gullible, let him turn in here.” To someone who lacks sense she says, ¹⁷“Stolen waters are sweet, and food eaten in secret is delicious.” ¹⁸But he does not know that the souls of the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of hell.



Today we go from the height of wisdom to the height of foolishness.

Wisdom is a difficult task, and the book of Proverbs is full of invitations to wisdom. The first nine chapters discuss how the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So wisdom is never independent of God—or taken apart from faith.

DIVINE WISDOM INVITES THE SIMPLE TO LIVE

Wisdom calls out as if a woman hosting a feast. She is a host, who desires to give food and wine. She sends out maids and calls out from the height of the city. She calls out among any who will hear, but her main target is the simple, the “naïve.” This isn’t a negative word, it’s just a person who is open-minded and lacking common sense. Wisdom calls the impressionable.

Folly is another word for foolishness. Here in Proverbs 9, Folly is also portrayed as a woman, and she is also calling for guests to come and eat. Folly mimics wisdom. There are a couple verses, v. 4 and v. 16, which are exactly alike in the Hebrew. Verses 3 and 14 are also parallel. She also has food. She is also calling from the height of the city. She also wants to host. She is also seeking the impressionable.

What kind of exposure are the children getting? Is it a constant diet of spiritual junk food and streaming TV trash? Do they feed on just as much wisdom in the Word of God?

How can we tell the difference? How can we know what is Wisdom and what is Folly? if you look closely, even though Folly is mimicking Wisdom, something is off. First, where Wisdom has put in the hard work of building her house, Folly is “boisterous.” She makes a racket. Folly controls TV, the movies, and much of the publishing world. She clouds governments with scandal and plagues churches with hypocrisy.

Second, Wisdom is at heart a host, wishing to give food and wine; meanwhile, Folly shows her self-importance by sitting on a throne.

Third, Wisdom has taken all the effort and care to prepare the house, table, food, and drink; meanwhile, Folly is a purveyor of stolen water and secret food.

Sin is a loud and noisy mess. It makes a racket. Sin is spelled with a capital “I”, for it shows its self-importance in every act. Sin recognizes zero blessings; its goods are stolen and hidden away in secret. A shady business deal here, an extramarital affair there.

Sin is an art. One can be trained in that art—in the deceit and selfishness of sin. This is the art of Folly. When the passerby finally joins in the meal of Folly and looks around, the place is a crypt. It’s a haunted house of death.

But that is the final difference between Folly and Wisdom. Wisdom leads to life. *“Man does not live on bread alone, but on every Word that comes from the mouth of God”* (Deut. 8:3).

Wisdom’s house has seven pillars. In Revelation, seven is a biblical number symbolizing God’s gracious activity on behalf of men. Wisdom’s house is ready.

She calls out from the highest point in the city. That is, wisdom does not try to hide her invitation. She also sends out her maids. We are reminded of Jesus' parable of the king's invitation to the wedding banquet for his son (Matthew 22:1–14). He sent out servants to invite people in. Both the maids and the servants might represent God's messengers who go out with the glorious gospel invitation.

To accept wisdom's invitation, we must first admit that we need it, that we are among the "simple" and "those who lack judgment" (verse 4). Then we also need to follow through and taste of the banquet—"eat my food and drink the wine" (verse 5). "*Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves,*" writes James. "*Do what it says*" (James 1:22). All this begins to take place in our lives when the Holy Spirit brings us to faith in Jesus.

So today we have gone from the height of Folly to the height of Wisdom. It would be the height of Folly to ...

- ignore the plague of sins contaminating the heart.
- to make our way through this life with theft and lies.
- to deny Jesus' death for sins.
- reject the words of the One who has tasted hell and has come back to tell us.

It would be the height of Wisdom to ...

- recognize we are simple customers who need guidance.
- search for eternal life in the Word of God, where we will find Jesus.
- when we have found Jesus there, in the Word, learn what He has to say.
- repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins.
- follow Him our whole lives long.
- pray as He taught and do as He wills.
- spread the table with the truth of Jesus before our best friends.
- fill the bellies of our hearts with spiritual food and comfort.
- love the God who causes our cup to run over with blessing.

Wisdom's feast in this life is but a foretaste of heaven, where we will join in "*the wedding feast of the Lamb*" (Revelation 19:9)—for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.