

Proverbs 1:20-33 – A warning against rejecting wisdom

20 Wisdom calls aloud in the street, she raises her voice in the public squares; 21 at the head of the noisy streets she cries out, in the gateways of the city she makes her speech:

22 “How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? 23 If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. 24 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, 25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — 27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you.

28 “Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. 29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord, 30 since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, 31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. 32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; 33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety.

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Last week we heard the writer telling his son to beware – beware of evildoers; beware of joining with them; avoid them, run away. Now he moves on to something new. He shows us wisdom, calling out to us, like a preacher in a public place – in the streets, in the public squares.

Wisdom is for everyone. God wants us all to learn the principles of wisdom. Educated or not, young or old, he calls out to us to become wise. The time is always right to begin living in wisdom. Wisdom stretches out her hand and pleads. We should not ignore it, live carelessly, or say it is only for others. Proverbs shows us that wisdom is needed in all of life.

Without wisdom, we invite disaster. Foolish people do not want to learn. They are proud and think they that already know how to live. They will not humble themselves to be taught and to be rebuked by God's word. But God warns us that we cannot laugh at him and be safe. God made the world, and his word tells us how life in it works. If we ignore those things, then we invite trouble and disaster for ourselves. Some trouble must always come to people living in a sinful world – we are all Adam's children and all must share in his punishment. But, some trouble comes because we are too foolish to avoid it.

So, here we are taught that God's wisdom will make a big difference to our lives. Chapter 2 talks more about the positive blessings of wisdom. Proverbs 22:3 says, “The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.”