

## Watching for Lady Wisdom

What would you do to acquire the greatest skill?

Proverbs 8

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • January 1, AD 2012

Scripture Reader and Reading: Luke – James 3.13–18

### **Prelude:**

I. What would you do to get the greatest skill that humans could ever have?

II. What if I told you

A. that it would only take a few minutes daily,

B. would you do it?

1. Does that sound like, “Just use this simple exercise device that we will sell you for only four easy payments of \$24.95 and in three minutes a day, after four weeks, you will have abs of steel”?

2. What I am proposing to you in this sermon

a) is something similar to what happened with Naaman,

b) the Syrian captain who had leprosy,

**10 And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, “Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean” (2Ki 5.10).**

(1) Naaman did not like that,

**11 But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, “Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.’ 12 Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?” So he turned and went away in a rage (2Ki 5.11, 12).**

- (2) Then someone pointed out the difference between easy and difficult,

13 And his servants came near and spoke to him, and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do something great, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’” (2Ki 5.13).

III. When you find out what you have to do to have this greatest of all skills,

- A. you might be tempted to think that it is too easy,
- B. that it will not work.
  - 1. Why do we insist on complicating things?
  - 2. Why do we think things have to be complex for them to be successful?
- C. Remember Naaman!

### **Persuasion:**

#### **I. Proverbs 8.1–10 Lady Wisdom and Her Call**

- A. Lady Wisdom calls out to us—Are we listening?
- B. She can be found and heard easily,
  - 1. which is the point of verses 1–3.
  - 2. I will show you later just how accessible she is.
- C. Verses 4 and 5 show
  - 1. Lady Wisdom making her wisdom available to us, and
  - 2. later we will see just how significant that is.
    - a) Are you simple?
    - b) Understand prudence!
      - (1) Are you foolish?
      - (2) Be of an understanding heart.

D. Verse 6 appeals to our desire to hear excellent things, and what is right.

E. Verses 7 and 8 will show you where to go.

1. Truth comes from the mouth of Lady Wisdom, because
2. wickedness is an abomination to her lips.
  - a) What you will hear coming from her mouth are words of righteousness,
  - b) not anything crooked or perverse.

F. Verse 9 explains

1. that this is all plain to him who understands, and
2. right to those who find knowledge.

G. Verse 10 shows that you have choices to make.

1. Everyone tells you to choose riches.
2. Schools at all levels tell us what will make us rich.

H. However, Lady Wisdom speaks to us and says

1. that we should receive her instruction and not silver,
2. that we should receive knowledge rather than choice gold.
  - a) Remember as is commonly said, “A fool and his money are soon parted.”
  - b) Conversely, the wise and his money stay together.

## II. Proverbs 8.11 Lady Wisdom and Her Excellence

**11 For wisdom is better than rubies,  
And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.  
(Pro 8.11)**

A. Here Solomon explains why Lady Wisdom spoke as she did in verse 10

1. that we should receive her instruction and knowledge, and
2. not silver and gold.

- B. Wisdom is better than rubies.
- C. Truly, anything we may desire cannot surpass the value of wisdom.
  - 1. These things being true,
  - 2. listen to how we can use wisdom.

### III. Proverbs 8.12–21 Lady Wisdom and Her Tools

- A. Right away we learn that there is a condition to receiving wisdom;
  - 1. prudence has to dwell in our hearts.
  - 2. Wisdom looks for knowledge and discretion.
- B. Then Lady Wisdom informs us that the fear of Yahweh God is to hate evil.
  - 1. The fear of the Lord,
    - a) as it relates to wisdom,
    - b) is a major theme in the Book of Proverbs.
  - 2. In Proverbs 1, after telling us what wisdom can do for us,
    - a) Solomon then said,
      - 7    **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge,  
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.  
(Pro 1.7)**
    - 3. Later in the same chapter, Solomon personifies wisdom as a woman,
      - a) saying that if we do not listen to wisdom crying out to us,
      - b) this will happen,
        - 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...”**

(Pro 1.28, 29)

4. Fear is such a foundation to wisdom,
  - a) that Solomon continued to write
  - b) that if we cry out for wisdom,

**5 Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,  
And find the knowledge of God.  
(Pro 2.5)**

5. We should not be surprised then to find Solomon saying this later,

**10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,  
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.  
(Pro 9.10)**

**33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom,  
And before honor is humility.  
(Pro 15.33)**

6. The fear of the Lord is foundational for wisdom, according to Proverbs 8,
  - a) so that it hates evil, pride, arrogance, and the perverse mouth,
  - b) all of which prevent a person from acquiring wisdom.

(1) Do the proud and arrogant think

(a) that they need wisdom, and

(b) will he go looking for it?

(2) No, and that is why wisdom despises those listed in Proverbs 8.13.

7. Whereas, if you fear the Lord,
  - a) you know there is Someone greater than you, and
  - b) you will listen to everything He says, and

(1) that attitude opens you up for the reception of wisdom.

C. Look at verses 14–16 and see the tools that wisdom will give you:

1. Counsel
2. Sound Wisdom
3. Understanding
4. Strength
5. Leadership
6. Justice

D. See who uses wisdom:

1. Kings
2. Rulers
3. Princes
4. Nobles
5. Judges

E. Then Lady Wisdom promises

1. that if you love her,
2. she will love you, and
  - a) that if you seek her diligently,
  - b) you will find her.

F. Verses 18ff, Next she wants you to see the results of taking in her wisdom:

1. Riches and honor
2. Enduring riches and righteousness
3. The fruit of gold and the revenue of silver
4. Life in the way of righteousness and in the paths of justice

5. Wealth and treasuries

G. Next, Lady Wisdom wants you to see who else uses her.

**IV. Proverbs 8.22–31 Lady Wisdom and Her Age**

A. The Lord Himself possesses Lady Wisdom and

1. used her in the beginning to create everything.
2. Do you understand what she is telling us?

B. She wants us to understand

1. that the very thing she offers to us,
2. the Lord Himself has used, or still uses.

C. The Lord Himself delights daily in wisdom,

1. using it as a master craftsman!
2. She delighted in the things that He has done!

D. All these things being true,

1. I hope that you are now persuaded to listen to Lady Wisdom, because
2. that is precisely what she wants us to do next.

**V. Proverbs 8.32–36 Lady Wisdom and Her Blessing**

A. Obviously, we are blessed if we keep her ways.

B. She repeats

1. that we can hear instruction and
2. be wise for doing so.

C. Again, she repeats that the person who listens to her is blessed.

1. We listen because we know that we do not have all the answers, and
2. we listen because we know that Lady Wisdom has all the answers!
  - a) We are blessed because if we find her,

- (1) we find life and
- (2) gain favor from the Lord.
- b) Yet, we sin against wisdom,
  - (1) when we do not listen to her and
  - (2) we wrong our own souls, for
    - (a) he who hates wisdom
    - (b) loves death.

D. Go back to verse 34 and look at the last two lines.

E. We are blessed,

- 1. if we listen to wisdom
  - a) *daily* anticipating her arrival,
  - b) eager to hear *daily* what she has to teach us next.
- 2. Based on this, I recommend in the strongest way possible
  - a) that you read from the Book of Proverbs *daily*,
  - b) reading the chapter that corresponds to the day of the month, and
    - (1) find something in that reading
    - (2) that you can write down some thoughts about, or
      - (a) for which you can pray.
      - (b) How long will this take?
        - i) For this point in my sermon, I timed myself reading Proverbs 27, because I did it on December 27.
        - ii) Do you know how long it took me to read it?
          - (1) Two minutes, thirty-eight seconds!
          - (2) Granted, you may want to write down some thoughts or pray about something that caught your attention, but

- (3) just a few minutes to take a sip of the wisdom that the Creator has made available to us!

**Exhortation:**

- I. After my sermon, I want to give every family a pamphlet on the Book of Proverbs, and I want all children who can read to have a copy of this pamphlet.
- II. Now, let me add to the abundance of wisdom that Lady Wisdom addressed.
- A. You can read the Book of Proverbs daily and pray for wisdom, and
- B. you will get wisdom, but
1. there is something additional that I want to show you
  2. that will increase your wisdom mightily.

22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and *the wisdom of God*" (1Co 1.22–24).

3 in [Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2.3).

III. If you want the full outpouring of God's wisdom,

- A. you have to be in Christ,
- B. where all the treasures of wisdom are hidden.
1. Paul wrote to the Galatians how they had entered Christ,

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3.26, 27).

2. You become a son or daughter of God
  - a) by having faith in Christ Jesus,

b) which is expressed through baptism.

(1) Do you trust Jesus to lead you in life?

(2) Do you have faith in Him to give His wisdom?

(a) It is one thing to acknowledge, but

(b) it is another thing to commit to it.

i) Go beyond mere acknowledgement and

ii) let us baptize you as soon as possible.