

Proverbs 9

Two Rivals

The Meaning of Proverbs

Proverbs is a collection of general wisdom given to the princes of the kingdom.

It blends both Godly wisdom with worldly wisdom.

It is 7 collections of sayings, proverbs and idioms

Not all sayings are universally true.

Some are in tension, perhaps contradiction to one another.

In fact this is true of all idioms or proverbs.

Each contain a kernel of truth but not truth entire.

I would say that this is like ourselves.

We know certain truths, but not all truths.

We have only our own perspective that can always stand to be expanded.

These proverbs create a web of wisdom that is held in tension.

So what is true wisdom?

How do we judge between one proverb or another?

Thankfully the collector of the Proverbs does provide a key.

That key is found in Proverbs 1-9.

Very simply, The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

That fear is a compound word – Fear & YHWH is a single concept – yir'at YHWH

Both rational and psychological.

Rational – the revelation of God's wishes.

Psychological – Love & Fear intertwined. Eg. Aslan Good and dangerous

Closest conception in fact is **humility**.

Humility (before God) is the beginning of Wisdom.

All of the proverbs are measured by this foundation.

Chapter 9 is the very last portion of the true instruction

before one is let loose into the collections.

It is epilogue and final word.

Two Rivals

There are two women holding two banquets.

Both prepare their feast and then give and invitation.

Lady Wisdom who is Noble vs. Mistress Folly who is Pretentious

v.1-6 describe Lady Wisdom while v.13-18 describe Mistress Folly

Wisdom has prepares (orderly) well while Folly does not prepare (unruly)

Wisdom goes all out, with servants and herself to call out from the high place.

Folly sits idly at her door and calls from the high place.

Folly picks specifically on those who are trying to go straight to tempt them.

“Let all who are simple come to my house!”

Lady Wisdom is earnest and straightforward, offering what she works for.

Folly speaks of what is Stolen and Secret, offering what is illicit and sensual.

Ultimately on offers the life, the other, tricks and leads to death.

Pretty obvious, right?

Not really.

Three Types of People

The Proverbs here assume 3 types of people.

The simple person is the one who is undecided – an inexperienced youth.

Someone who is gullible and undeveloped – someone on the fence.

That is the person Wisdom and Folly fight for.

That person’s very life is in the balance.

But there are two other types of people

The section between the two rivals is an exposition upon them.

One is the mocker and the other is the wise.

They are those who have already established their path.

The wicked mocker lacks the singular trait required of wisdom.

The wise have this trait in spades.

What is that trait?

Humility.

The wise crave evaluation, reflection, instruction, correction and become wiser

The foolish hate it.

Even the pagan philosopher Socrates knows this truth.

He said, “All I know is that I know nothing.”

Like any other proverb, it is of course and overstatement.

But a wise one.

Three Inclinations

So what does this have to do with us?

I don't think it is so easy put ourselves into these three categories.

First of all because no wise and humble person would lay claim to it!

Instead I see this most helpful as three inclinations within us.

Sometimes we are the simpleton.

There is something in us that is still in need of formation.

Things in which we feel tempted or sit on the fence on.

Sometimes we are like this when we are unable to do what we know is right.

We face temptation and we give in.

Wisdom calls us as does Folly.

But this is because two stronger natures are within us.

One is the pride.

Whenever you are unable to take correction, rebuke and criticism.

Whenever you look suspiciously upon the one who makes you uncomfortable.

When you lash out and blame others and vilify them

to make yourself look better.

You are a mocker and hope for you slips away.

You take Folly's hand and it makes you feel good.

But it will destroy you.

The other nature is that of humility.

Humble People... (- John Piippo)

... are not concerned to make an impression on the world

... set aside the flowering of their own personality

... do not take themselves too seriously

... have a sense of humour about themselves

... are not set off track by personal degradation

... are not set off track by personal eminence

... are not impatient when people praise or affirm them

... are not haunted or obsessed by things said about them

... wastes no time defending their own reputation

... are not afraid of failure

... are not downcast after committing a fault

... can exist without getting any special recognition

... are able to weigh criticism

... don't believe it all depends on them

... think of God

... direct their hearts and mind to God, and the things of God

... are confident in the power of God.

Lady Wisdom and Mistress Folly call to you today.

You will form the person you are by what you choose.

You will either become wise or foolish, humble or proud.

This happens in increments.

May You follow Jesus who is the epitome of humility and love

and resist the devil who would like to stroke your ego and sell you a lie.