

Proverbs 8: 1-5, 10-13, 17-21

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?
² On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
³ beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:
⁴ 'To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.
⁵ O simple ones, learn prudence;
acquire intelligence, you who lack it.
¹⁰ Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold;
¹¹ for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

¹² I, wisdom, live with prudence,
and I attain knowledge and discretion.
¹³ The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil.
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil
and perverted speech I hate.
¹⁷ I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.

¹⁸ Riches and honour are with me,
enduring wealth and prosperity.
¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold,
and my yield than choice silver.
²⁰ I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
²¹ endowing with wealth those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

Vs. 1-5, 10-11 - Where is wisdom to be found? According to Proverbs she is everywhere, and she cries out to be heard. But more than that. She cries out to be chosen, pursued and embraced above all else. This passage emphasizes several things about wisdom. First, wisdom is more valuable than all other valuables (silver, gold and fine Jewels represent those things we value much, material and otherwise). Second, wisdom is attainable by those who truly seek her ("I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me." (17)). And as wisdom is attainable, one can also "acquire intelligence" and "learn prudence," both of which are attributes of wisdom. Remaining "simple" is choosing to be ignorant rather than intelligent about oneself, one's motivations and how to better relate to others with compassion and discernment.

Vs. 12-13, 18-21 – Like other passages in Proverbs we've already explored, the pairing of words is a poetic device emphasizing what is stated. Walking in the way of righteousness and the paths of justice (20) means gaining knowledge (learning) in how to be "discrete" (behaving or speaking in such a way as to avoid causing offense or revealing private information) and "prudent" (governing and disciplining one's behaviour and exercising good judgement) (12). It is also about resisting arrogant behaviour and perverted speech (thinking you're better than others, dismissing them, putting them down and speaking negative things about them) (13).

Such righteousness/justice which is wisdom is also a way/path to understanding what love means in the real nitty-gritty of life where relationships can be challenging. And unless we desire it above all else and value it above all other treasures we will never be "endowed" with the wealth it can provide us (21).

What do you think? Do you truly want wisdom above all other things? Will you commit to the righteousness and justice it demands? Will you grow in prudence and discretion? Will you temper any arrogance in you and any perverted speech that tears others down?

PRAYER: Thank you, O God, for awakening us and stirring us toward the way of wisdom. Give us a greater passion for it and for dimensions of it that can be a challenge for us. May we resist the arrogance of perceiving ourselves as so much better than others, more righteous and just, better in discerning what is right from what is wrong. Make us humble, open, receptive and compassionate above all else. May we keep discovering the joy in exercising good judgement, prudence, care, discretion and tenderness when engaging others, and especially those who are vulnerable on the one hand, and those who can trigger us on the other. In Jesus' name; Amen.