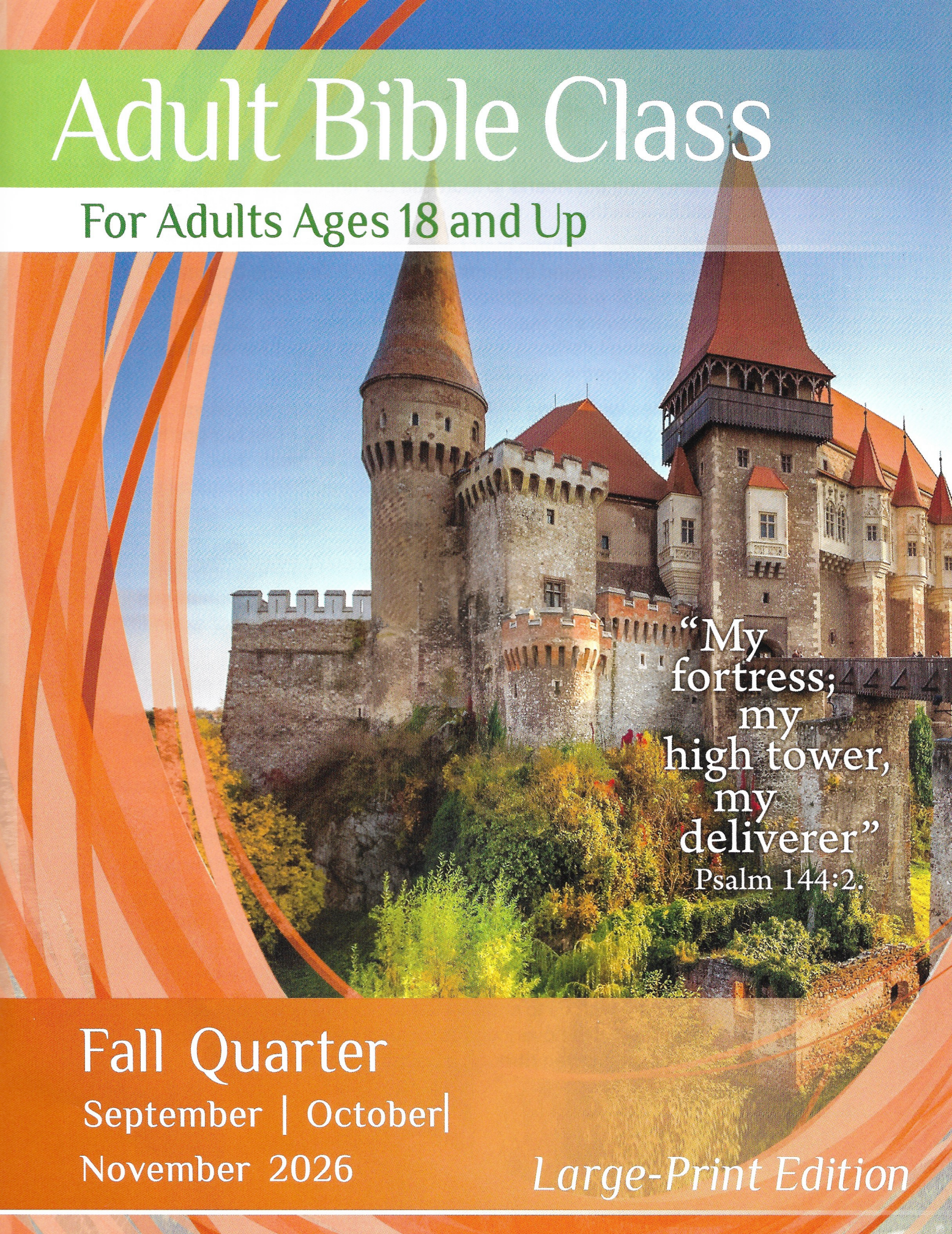


Adult Bible Class

For Adults Ages 18 and Up



“My
fortress;
my
high tower,
my
deliverer”

Psalm 144:2.

Fall Quarter

September | October |

November 2026

Large-Print Edition

Adult Bible Class

Large-Print Edition

FALL QUARTER

September, October, November 2026

Editorial	2
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God's Wisdom Versus Man's Wisdom

UNIT 1: The Way of the Fool

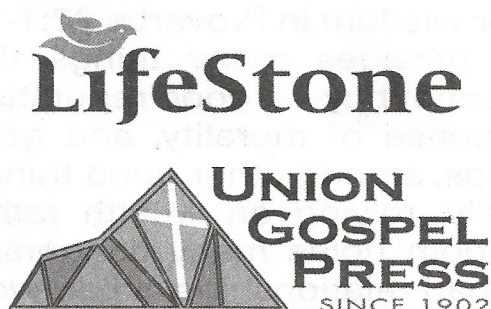
Sept. 6—Wisdom Calls the Foolish—Prov. 1:20-33.....	4
Sept. 13—The Folly of Trusting in Riches—Ps. 49:1-20	9
Sept. 20—Humble Wisdom Instructs Proud Folly—Prov. 30:1-14.....	14
Sept. 27—There Is a Way that Seems Right—Prov. 14:1-19	19

UNIT 2: The Way of the Wise

Oct. 4—Wisdom over Strength—Eccl. 9:11-18.....	24
Oct. 11—Wisdom and Money—Prov. 22:1-16.....	29
Oct. 18—A Soft Answer over Wrath—Prov. 15:1-15	34
Oct. 25—The Wisdom of the Meek—Jas. 3:13-18	39
Nov. 1—The Wisdom of the Gospel—1 Cor. 1:18-31.....	43

UNIT 3: Wisdom's Reward

Nov. 8—Seek for Wisdom as for Silver—Prov. 2:1-9.....	47
Nov. 15—Enduring Trials in Wisdom—Jas. 1:1-11	51
Nov. 22—Wisdom Brings Blessing—Prov. 3:13-35	55
Nov. 29—Fruitfulness of Wisdom—2 Pet. 1:1-11	59
Paragraphs on Places and People	63
Daily Bible Readings	64



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Edited and published quarterly by

LIFESTONE MINISTRIES

UNION GOSPEL PRESS

Rev. W. B. Musselman, Founder

ISBN 978-1-64495-996-1

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

PROV. 1:20 Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets:

21 She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*,

22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

23 Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;

27 When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.

28 Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

NOTES

Wisdom Calls the Foolish

Lesson Text: Proverbs 1:20-33

Related Scriptures: Proverbs 5:7-14; 8:1-36; 9:1-12;
Isaiah 3:9-15; Jeremiah 6:16-21

TIME: between 971 and 931 B.C.

PLACE: Jerusalem

GOLDEN TEXT—"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets" (Proverbs 1:20).

Lesson Exposition

Throughout Proverbs 1 through 9, readers meet four characters or types of people. The first is the book's implied speaker: an experienced wise person.

Next, Proverbs features an inexperienced person growing in wisdom. The inexperienced need humility and correction, but they have begun to heed the invitation to wisdom throughout the book.

The main character of our text is the simpleton. This person is described in Proverbs 14:15 as inexperienced. Proverbs 19:25 holds out hope that the simpleton can turn to wisdom. Simplicity does not mean complete ignorance but gullibility.

Finally, there is the fool. Fools in Proverbs have turned their backs on the fear of the Lord consistently (cf. 1:7). Today, the word "fool" connotes ignorance. In Proverbs, the word often means a deep, settled disposition of opposition to God (cf. 14:9).

THE SIMPLETON'S INVITATION— Prov. 1:20-22

A gaggle of simpletons moved through the street, on to the town center, and then walked by the city gates. (City gates functioned as a city hall at

that time.) Suddenly, jarringly, a woman's voice shattered the city's white noise.

The woman called to the unsuspecting simpletons. She did not mind that everyone was staring because the simpletons' destiny rode on whether they took her wisdom to heart.

Proverbs uses the literary device of personification to display different life paths. Lady Wisdom invited readers to learn from her experience in chapters 1 and 8. Another persona enters in chapters 5 and 7. In contrast to Lady Wisdom, Lady Seduction invited people to follow their desires into a life of short-lived pleasure.

Lady Wisdom ignored marketplace protocol and made a racket. Solomon used four terms in verses 20-21 for how she raised her voice: a ringing cry, a loud noise, a cry, and a speech. She might be ignored, but she would be heard.

Lady Wisdom was a master teacher. Beginning in verse 22 she asked a series of rhetorical questions. Her questions began the same way that suffering psalmists started their laments, asking, "How long?" She was not mocking the simpletons, but wanted them to see where their path of indifference led.

First, Lady Wisdom asked about their affections. Why did the simpletons love gullibility? Were they tired of being so easily molded in the world's hands? Then she asked about their arrogant speech and their distaste for learning. They were like curably ill people who hate medicine.

THE SIMPLETON'S OFFER—

Prov. 1:23

Lady Wisdom sounded an alarm. When the word “reproof” occurs in Proverbs, it often focuses on the discomfort of being rebuked. At best, Proverbs 29:1 says people bristle at reproof. At worst, Proverbs 5:12 shows that people hate being rebuked.

Lady Wisdom wanted simpletons to know the payoff if they were willing to be corrected. What did the simpleton need to do to receive these riches? Lady Wisdom used one of the Old Testament's most common words for responding to God. Prophets used the word “reproof” hundreds of times. Lady Wisdom urged the same thing: turn from sin and folly and turn to God.

THE SIMPLETON'S WARNING—

Prov. 1:24-27

It was not too late for the simpletons to turn, but they had stiff-armed Lady Wisdom in the past. She extended a helping hand, but the simpletons ignored it. The simpletons were tolerant of many things but not of Lady Wisdom's rebukes.

Her outstretched hand would not be unlimited, though. A storm was coming. Final judgment is certain, and the book of Proverbs warns of earthly consequences for foolishness.

Lady Wisdom's judgment is stirring. One of her judgment words in verse 26, “calamity,” also describes falling on hard times in Proverbs 27:10. Another of her judgment words used in 1:27, “distress,” is from the same Hebrew root word translated in 11:8 as “trou-

ble.” Like the early signs of a tornado, the simpletons created conditions that later would cause horror. Lady Wisdom knew that today's fun and mischief would unexpectedly turn to tomorrow's terror.

Lady Wisdom was more interested in truth and life change than in politeness, so she warned that when the storm came, she would laugh. Laughter and judgment seem a strange pairing, but God's laughter in the Old Testament is associated with judgment.

For example, in Psalm 2:4, God laughs at nations who think they can derail His Son's kingdom. Lady Wisdom's laughter is borne not of hatred but rather of the unshakable conviction that willfully rejecting the Lord's wisdom is a ridiculous decision.

THE SIMPLETON'S REGRET—

Prov. 1:28-31

The simpletons were a mysterious bunch. At some point, they crossed the point of no return and became recalcitrant fools. The fact that Lady Wisdom was appealing to them means that they were not yet beyond hope. But Lady Wisdom knew the danger of repeated, unrepentant sin. At a certain point, it would be too late. Psalm 95 attests to this reality when the psalmist says to listen to God's call to repentance today. A day will come for simpletons when there is no time to turn around their lives, their relationships, or their reputations.

While God's forgiveness can be received by faith up until one's last breath, as in the case of the thief on the cross, that does not mean the damage of a lifetime of foolish living can be undone (cf. 2 Chr. 33:13-17).

Lady Wisdom painted a grim picture of reversed roles. She called, and the simpletons ignored her. They would call to her one day, and she would rebuff them. The simpletons could not blame her when judgment came.

Proverbs 1:7 reveals the core issue: simpletons do not fear the Lord. In this verse we read that fearing God is foundational for a life of wisdom. Psalm 130:4 declares that fearing God flows from receiving God's forgiveness. The fear of the Lord bundles repentance, trust, and reverence into one powerful phrase. Those who fear God are in awe of Him.

Simpletons are in danger of making bad decision. Fools are those who have gone down a path that rejects God and refuses to fear Him.

Lady Wisdom moved from a storm metaphor to a feast metaphor. Rejecting her invitation set the table for the simpletons' eventual banquet of all the mockery, pride, selfishness, and carelessness that they had sown throughout life.

THE SIMPLETON'S DESTINY— Prov. 1:32-33

Lady Wisdom invited the simpletons to turn to the fear of the Lord in verse 23. If the simpletons decided to turn away from the fear of the Lord, they would die. Eventually, indecision becomes a decision, and simpletons find themselves turning their backs on the fear of the Lord. That leads to death. Lady Wisdom surprised the simpletons with a note of hope.

Whoever would merely listen would have life. It sounds so simple, but turning, trusting, obeying—all of this is wrapped in one word, "hear." Deuteronomy 6:4-6 famously uses the term to call Israel to respond to the Lord. To truly hear God's Word is to respond (cf. 1 Sam. 15:22; Matt. 11:15).

No wonder Lady Wisdom promised so much to the one who heard her. Rather than death, the listener would receive life. She described the listener's life as firm, solid, confident, and secure. "Security" here does not refer to a life free of suffering but to

the steadiness that comes from trusting God. Wisdom then described the listener's life as at ease and free from fear of disaster. Again, this does not refer to a pain-free life but a life that does not fear the judgment of God or the fallout of bad decisions.

The unperturbed stability of the listener is the exact opposite of the fearful dread of disaster described in Proverbs 1:26-27. Ironically, the simpletons sought ease with their lackadaisical approach to life and God, but instead they forfeited the peace available through submission to God.

—Matthew Swale

QUESTIONS

1. Who are the four main characters in Proverbs 1 through 9?
2. How does the way Proverbs uses the word "fool" differ from the way people use it today?
3. How are wisdom and folly personified and contrasted?
4. How did Lady Wisdom begin her speech in Proverbs 1:22?
5. How did Lady Wisdom want her hearers to respond?
6. What is certain for those who reject God's wisdom?
7. Why did Lady Wisdom laugh at those who refuse to listen?
8. What transforms someone from a simpleton into a fool? Does this happen suddenly or over time?
9. What did Lady Wisdom call simpletons to do?
10. What is ironic about the eventual fate of the simpletons who refused to listen to Wisdom?

—Tom Greene

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. Wisdom can be found almost anywhere by those who are willing to listen (Prov. 1:20-21).
2. We should be concerned about those who make unwise decisions (vss. 22-23).
3. We should not ignore wise advice from others (vss. 24-25).
4. Destruction often comes unexpectedly, like a whirlwind (vss. 26-27).
5. If one ignores the way of wisdom, one may have no help in times of trouble (vss. 28-30).
6. Foolish living often comes to a fitting conclusion (vs. 31).
7. Living for ease and prosperity leads to downfall, unlike the way of wisdom (vss. 32-33).

—James Frohlich

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. Why is the fear of the Lord so important in pursuing wisdom?
2. How does it feel to have someone reject your hard-earned wisdom?
3. Have you observed the wise walking securely and simpletons worrying about the fallout of their destructive way of life?
4. Has anyone ever given you advice or correction that helped you grow in wisdom?
5. Have you ever witnessed someone reject advice or correction, then later seek help from friends or family and not receive it (cf. Prov. 1:28-30)?
6. Have you ever realized a lack of wisdom in your life? What did you do about it?

—Matthew Swale

Golden Text Illuminated

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets” (Proverbs 1:20).

The image of wisdom crying out in the streets is a powerful, urgent one. True wisdom comes from God. Proverbs tells us, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (9:10). Wisdom honors God and is reflected by a life that acknowledges His authority over all areas of life. This wisdom is a transformative force in our lives.

In Solomon’s time, people often conducted business publicly at the city gates, where there would be many witnesses (cf. Ruth 4:1-13). The public nature of wisdom’s call reminds us that God’s invitation to growth and transformation is open to all, not just to the elite or the specially educated.

Responding to wisdom’s call requires repentance. We see this illustrated in the life of David. When confronted by the prophet Nathan about his sin with Bath-sheba, David responded with genuine repentance. His heartfelt cry, recorded in Psalm 51:10, reflects the transformative power of godly wisdom: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

As we heed wisdom’s call and submit to her teachings, she transforms us. Paul described this process in 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

So, when we hear wisdom crying out through Scripture and through godly counsel, let us respond with open hearts, allowing God to conform us into the image of His Son.

—Gene Kissinger