

Proverbs Collection I: A Father's Instruction – Part 3 (c. 969t – 932t BC)

Proverbs 7–9

Wisdom Will Guard You Against the Seduction of the Adulterous Woman

- 7:1 My child, keep my words
and treasure up my commands in your own keeping.
- 2 Keep my commands so that you may live,
and obey my instruction as your most prized possession.
- 3 Bind them on your forearm;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
- 4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call understanding a close relative,
5 so that they may keep you from the adulterous woman,
from the loose woman who flatters you with her words.
- 6 For at the window of my house
through my window lattice I looked out
7 and I saw among the naive—
I discerned among the youths—
a young man who lacked wisdom.
- 8 He was passing by the street near her corner,
making his way along the road to her house
9 in the twilight, the evening,
in the dark of the night.
- 10 Suddenly a woman came out to meet him!
She was dressed like a prostitute and with secret intent.
- 11 (She is loud and rebellious,
she does not remain at home—
12 at one time outside, at another in the wide plazas,
and by every corner she lies in wait.)
- 13 So she grabbed him and kissed him,
and with a bold expression she said to him,
14 "I have fresh meat at home;
today I have fulfilled my vows!
- 15 That is why I came out to meet you,
to look for you, and I found you!
- 16 I have spread my bed with elegant coverings,
with richly colored fabric from Egypt.
- 17 I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
- 18 Come, let's drink deeply of lovemaking until morning,
let's delight ourselves with sexual intercourse.
- 19 For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a journey of some distance.
- 20 He has taken a bag of money with him;
he will not return until the end of the month."
- 21 She persuaded him with persuasive words;
with her smooth talk she compelled him.
- 22 Suddenly he went after her
like an ox that goes to the slaughter,
like a stag prancing into a trapper's snare
- 23 till an arrow pierces his liver—
like a bird hurrying into a trap,
and he does not know that it will cost him his life.
- 24 So now, sons, listen to me,
and pay attention to the words I speak.
- 25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways—
do not wander into her pathways;
- 26 for she has brought down many fatally wounded,
and all those she has slain are many.

27 Her house is the way to the grave,
going down to the chambers of death.

Lady Wisdom—Who She Is and What She Offers

8:1 Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?
2 At the top of the elevated places along the way,
at the intersection of the paths she takes her stand;
3 beside the gates opening into the city,
at the entrance of the doorways she cries out:
4 “To you, O people, I call out,
and my voice calls to all mankind.
5 You who are naive, discern wisdom!
And you fools, understand discernment!
6 Listen, for I will speak excellent things,
and my lips will utter what is right.
7 For my mouth speaks truth,
and my lips hate wickedness.
8 All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing in them twisted or crooked.
9 All of them are clear to the discerning
and upright to those who find knowledge.
10 Receive my instruction rather than silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold.
11 For wisdom is better than rubies,
and desirable things cannot be compared to her.
12 “I, wisdom, live with prudence,
and I find knowledge and discretion.
13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate arrogant pride and the evil way
and perverse utterances.
14 Counsel and sound wisdom belong to me;
I possess understanding and might.
15 Kings reign by means of me,
and potentates decree righteousness;
16 by me princes rule,
as well as nobles and all righteous judges.
17 I love those who love me,
and those who seek me find me.
18 Riches and honor are with me,
long-lasting wealth and righteousness.
19 My fruit is better than the purest gold,
and what I produce is better than choice silver.
20 I walk in the path of righteousness,
in the pathway of justice,
21 that I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth,
and that I may fill their treasuries.
22 The LORD created me as the beginning of his works,
before his deeds of long ago.
23 From eternity I was appointed,
from the beginning, from before the world existed.
24 When there were no deep oceans I was born,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;
25 before the mountains were set in place—
before the hills—I was born,
26 before he made the earth and its fields,
or the beginning of the dust of the world.
27 When he established the heavens, I was there;

- when he marked out the horizon over the face of the deep,
28 when he established the clouds above,
when the fountains of the deep grew strong,
29 when he gave the sea his decree
that the waters should not pass over his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 then I was beside him as a master craftsman,
and I was his delight day by day,
rejoicing before him at all times,
31 rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth,
and delighting in its people.
32 “So now, children, listen to me;
blessed are those who keep my ways.
33 Listen to my instruction so that you may be wise,
and do not neglect it.
34 Blessed is the one who listens to me,
watching at my doors day by day,
waiting beside my doorway.
35 For the one who finds me finds life
and receives favor from the LORD.
36 But the one who does not find me brings harm to himself;
all who hate me love death.”

Wisdom and Folly—Rivals for Your Heart

- 9:1 Wisdom has built her house;
she has carved out its seven pillars.
2 She has prepared her meat, she has mixed her wine;
she also has arranged her table.
3 She has sent out her female servants;
she calls out on the highest places of the city.
4 “Whoever is naive, let him turn in here,”
she says to those who lack understanding.
5 “Come, eat some of my food,
and drink some of the wine I have mixed.
6 Abandon your foolish ways so that you may live,
and proceed in the way of understanding.”
7 Whoever corrects a mocker is asking for insult;
whoever reproves a wicked person receives abuse.
8 Do not reprove a mocker or he will hate you;
reprove a wise person and he will love you.
9 Give instruction to a wise person, and he will become wiser still;
teach a righteous person and he will add to his learning.
10 The beginning of wisdom is to fear the LORD,
and acknowledging the Holy One is understanding.
11 For because of me your days will be many,
and years will be added to your life.
12 If you are wise, you are wise to your own advantage,
but if you are a mocker, you alone must bear it.
13 The woman called Folly is brash,
she is naive and does not know anything.
14 So she sits at the door of her house,
on a seat at the highest point of the city,
15 calling out to those who are passing by her in the way,
who go straight on their way.
16 “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here,”
she says to those who lack understanding.
17 “Stolen waters are sweet,
and food obtained in secret is pleasant!”

18 But they do not realize that the dead are there,
that her guests are in the depths of the grave.

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