

## Proverbs Week #77 (8:14-16)

*Counsel and sound judgment are Mine; I have understanding and power. By Me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by Me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth. Proverbs 8:14-16*

In preparation for today's lesson, I read two articles by John Adams; one written in 1765 and the other written in 1776. The first essay talked about the importance of education and virtue in combating the abuse of feudal or canonical (church) law. His review of history reminds us that an uneducated populace will surrender their freedoms and liberties to any ruler who promises happiness, regardless of the virtues or lack of virtues of those who would rule. The second essay was written to explore what form of government is best suited to protect the liberty and rights of individuals. The principles of both of these articles are neatly consolidated in today's verses. For it is the relationship to Wisdom in the hearts of any person that will make them fit to rule and able to be ruled.

It is by the counsel and sound judgment of Wisdom that a ruler's success or failure is measured. Wisdom's standard is justice as seen in the eyes of God. In the study of theology, wisdom is a communicable attribute. We are created in the image of God and share some of His attributes. As believers in Yeshua, God is at work conforming us to the image of His son. Yeshua is wise and when He was on earth He grew in wisdom – we need to be more like Him!

### **Action Items:**

**Learn** – Today's verses bring our attention to kings, rulers, princes, and nobles. We are in danger of not learning the importance of Wisdom's role in their lives because the subject matter may not seem practical. You might say, "I'm not preparing for one of these offices so why learn about them?" Are there important lessons to be learned about justice even if you are not training to be a lawyer or judge? Why is it that words like justice, freedom, and liberty have been used as battle cries throughout history? What dangers exist when a people have fought hard to obtain something and then hand it to the next generation who live in more peaceful times?

**Discern** – How do we determine good laws from bad ones? Is alignment with a political party enough to secure justice? My intent is not to sidetrack us in a political debate but to emphasize that as we study scripture we can apply what we learn. Part of this growth in wisdom comes from seeking God at the start and keeping His glory as our goal in all we do. This includes the topics of government, law, and sociology. We should not overcomplicate or oversimplify Wisdom. Loving God and growing in wisdom expands God's rule into all areas of life. As we grow in discernment, we grow in our understanding of God's truth as it applies to real life.

**Receive** – The first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs compel us repeatedly to receive Wisdom and Her teaching. If we receive these few verses, we will be reminded that the subject of wisdom goes beyond ourselves and the little circle of people God has placed around us. The principles of justice and righteousness apply to individuals and nations.

**Impart** – Each generation will struggle to establish and maintain justice and equity. Those who are old enough to define, defend, and preserve these virtues must also seek to impart the skills to the next generation. In our day we may be overwhelmed by political systems that seem beyond repair, but we must never be distracted or forget that our primary goal is to conform ourselves to the image of our Messiah. In our marriages, families, communities, cities, and beyond we must seek to be the light that God desires for us to be. His plans are best seen as we understand and continue to do and teach His inspired scriptures.

### **Suggested Activities for families:**

John Adams wrote in 1765 that the foundation of any society's strength would be in education. He saw one of the greatest enemies of liberty as being ignorance of the common person. In his thinking, an uneducated people were like camels or elephants to the ruling class and were not free but slaves.

Play a game of King or President for a Day. Set up a scope of rule for the newly appointed leader. The kingdom or state may be limited to all the dolls or army men in the house, pets or farm animals, or real people (if you are brave). The goal or end of the game is to bring glory to God (1 Cor 10:31). How one plays the game is itself part of the game. Why would anyone want a ruler? What does a king or president do? The idea of having power or control might sound fun at first because you might think, "Hey! Now everyone has to do what I say!" But in our fallen world most people do not like to be told what to do. What is a ruler to do about that? If you can reach the point of asking these questions together as a family your game will have begun. Explore the importance of virtue, morals, and wisdom as they apply to leading and following in a kingdom or country.