

Proverbs Week #78 (8:17-19)

I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. Riches and honor are with me, long-lasting wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than the purest gold, and what I produce is better than choice silver. Proverbs 8:17-19 NET

Anyone can have a measure of riches or honor in this life. To truly possess wealth that is long lasting and in righteousness, one must have a right relationship with Wisdom. To be rich and honored and be a fool is a dangerous position. Yeshua teaches us how great a tragedy it would be to have riches apart from life with God.

For what does it benefit a person if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life? Or what can a person give in exchange for his life? Matthew 16:26 NET

The love that Wisdom expresses is a love that is given and received. In the relationships we have with one another, we may worry about whether the love we feel or express to another is received. We may not always feel like the ones we love return our love for them. Not so with Wisdom! The assurance we have in this proverb is that She will return the love given and those who seek Her will find Her. The intimacy She intends for us to have with Her is greater than any relationship we have, even if we compare it with our most favorite aunt or the best grandmother in the world! The relationship you have with Her will produce the best of the best in your life; better is Her produce than gold or silver. You can imagine how good it would be to have a real money tree (that is a plant that grew money). Knowing Wisdom (loving Her and seeking Her) is better than having the biggest money tree whose branches were weighed down with millions of dollars!

Action Items:

Learn – Who is this woman Wisdom that the Bible teaches us to love and seek? She is not an imaginary friend. She is not someone we will meet feeding ducks at the lake or buying groceries at a store. Who exactly is She? She is real but not like any other woman we have ever met or will meet. I believe it would do us good to apply the best of virtues from our relationships with our mother, wife, aunts, grandmothers, sisters, and female friends with Wisdom. The best of every one of these relationships will still not compare to Her but it can help us understand Her, who She is, and why the Bible presents Her to us as a woman we should greatly prize and one who we should be seeking.

Discern – Much is said in our day about seeking to be prosperous and rich. To be wise we and our families must learn to know the difference between what is real wealth and what is not. Growing in success is often compared to climbing a ladder. You start at the bottom and with patience, perseverance, and hard work you climb to the top of the ladder. The tragedy is that without wisdom or discernment one might be climbing a ladder that is leaning against the wrong wall. Not all ladders in life lead to true riches and honor. Wisdom's ladders will always be leaning against the right 'wall.'

Receive – If we are in the wrong or have done wrong, to be wise, we must humbly admit the wrong. When we fail to live according to God's standards we should not become depressed and quit. At these times we must cry out to God and turn to Him. Our learning to accept His correction brings about repentance in our lives. Repentance involves turning from the wrong way to God and walking in the way that is right. Repentance is not just a one-time act. A life of faithfulness to God begins with repentance but is also characterized by daily trusting in Him. Receiving Wisdom's guidance in our lives will be marked by a propensity to turn to God when life's trials or circumstances tempt us to turn away from Him.

Impart – Our ability to demonstrate our devotion to Wisdom and to pass this devotion to the next generation is the greatest inheritance we can give our children and grandchildren. A desire to impart true wisdom will be reflected in how we prioritize and order our lives. Our devotion to Wisdom must be demonstrated in deeds as well as in the words we speak. Do we as parents love Wisdom? Is our love and devotion to Her obvious to our children? Do we love Her with all our hearts or do we give Her 'lip-service'? Our children will see and know the difference.

Suggested Activities for families:

In our last Proverbs lesson, I suggested playing king for a day. This week's activity changes the role from ruler to judge. Start an apprenticeship in fruit inspecting. Buy some fruit this week with your children and teach them how to judge which fruit is good and bad. What do you look for in bananas or apples to determine which one to buy? Help them learn how to determine which watermelon or cantaloupe is ripe and ready to eat. Teach them about the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22,23). Help them learn to distinguish between good fruit and bad fruit in their own lives.