

Proverbs Week #81 (8:32-36)

“Now therefore, O sons, listen to Me, for blessed are they who keep My ways. Heed instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it. Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at My doorposts. For he who finds Me finds life and obtains favor from the LORD. But he who sins against Me injures himself; all those who hate Me love death.” Prov 8:32-36

The first nine chapters of Proverbs can be compared to a schoolmaster who prepares their students for what lies ahead. The long chapters that exhort us to pay attention to the words of wisdom are intended to create in us hearts and minds that can use the lofty sayings of the wise with skill. We must be prepared by God to use His words for His good purposes and not to harm others. Our words can bring healing and reconciliation or they can produce grief, strife, and even death. God used a human agent inspired by His Holy Spirit to pen these words that started with “Now therefore, O sons...” In the context of relationships, God enables us to learn and experience His truth. Our task is to listen, to heed instruction, to be wise, to not neglect, to watch, and to wait. As we wait and put our hope in God we can be assured that He will not hide Himself from us. If we seek Him we will find Him. The true Shepherd of our soul is not a thief. He does not come to kill and destroy us. He laid down His life so that we could live life as it was intended to be lived (John 10:8-15).

Action Items:

Learn – The Shema teaches us to place God’s commandments on our doorpost and gates. Whether we understand this to be literal or figurative, these words are commanding us something. Have we been trained and matured by these words? Learning and re-learning lessons may not always be easy, but the lessons are to be learned with God not apart from Him. Wisdom wants us to know that even if we have to wait and seek Her that the process of finding Her is pleasing to the LORD. We may not always understand God’s ways but we can be assured His ways are always good and right.

Discern – How do we know when we have found Wisdom? This question is not easy. In asking this question we are in danger of being wise in our own eyes or leaning on our own understanding. At least that is one struggle I have when I try to answer this question for myself. What I’ve found to be true again and again is that God is bigger than my doubts and fears. Yeshua teaches that those who love Him will know Him because He will disclose Himself to them (John 14:21). It is more than just an intellectual exercise or wishful thinking! Our faith is in a God who is there, here, and everywhere – whether we feel it or not.

Receive – If you are able to bear what God is teaching in these verses you can find real hope in this world. Proverbs are not always easy to understand or receive. Their messages can be like a coarse file grating against our skin, but God is not always standing in heaven with a paddle and harsh words. If you can hear Wisdom’s words effectually, you will be blessed and known by Her as one who keeps Her ways. Will you open your ears and hearts to Her call today and every day?

Impart – “...to impart shrewdness to the morally naïve, and a discerning plan to the young person.” (Prov 1:4) To be wise in God’s eyes is to be skilled in how we apply His truth to life’s everyday decisions, thoughts, and plans. Our commitment to love God and His ways is for ourselves and for the benefit of our families. Loving life and passing on a love for life is a wise thing to do. In the midst of death and mourning we are reminded that life is precious.

Suggested Activities for families:

Consider the mezuzot in your homes – pause as you go through the doors of your homes. Take some time this week to relate the importance of God’s commandments in the Shema regarding the writing of God’s words on the doorpost and on gates. Discuss today’s verses as families and use this time to emphasize finding wisdom in these places. Wisdom wants us to listen, watch (daily), and wait for Her at her gates and doorposts. You could practice this by praying simply, “God grant me to know Wisdom as I go through this doorway.”