

Proverbs Week #83 (9:7-9)

“Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you. Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.” Proverbs 9:7-9

As we seek to learn the wisdom that the Book of Proverbs presents we will learn that not everyone wants to be wise. Some people are “happy” to be fools and may not respond kindly when they are told they are not being wise. Our verses start out by informing us that we can expect a person who mocks God not to respond well to correction. The parallel to the fool here is the wise man. Instead of insult as a return for correction, we are told a rebuke to a wise person brings about love. Does that sound strange?

Like most proverbs, the important thing to learn is how to take this information and make it useful. These verses also tell that a wise and righteous person grows in wisdom when corrected. How can this knowledge help us and prepare us for the task of being wise ourselves?

Learn: How do the themes of this proverb apply to a person who is a student as compared to a person who is a teacher? As young people, the things you are learning now should be seen in view of your future children (if the Lord is willing to give you a family). The lessons to be learned equally apply for parents or children. The call of wisdom goes across the generations. Learning from this will benefit you.

Discern: How does today’s lesson help you better recognize wisdom and foolishness in yourself? I ask the question that way first to keep you from thinking, “How does today’s lesson help explain how foolish or wise my brother or sister is?” It is not always easy to perceive foolishness in yourself. If you are going to learn to “discern wise counsel” (Prov 1:2) then you will need to face the very real possibility that some one may come along some day and try to correct you. Now if your parents are alive, you still live with them, and your sense of hearing is not impaired – you are likely to have experience dealing with correction (maybe even within the last few minutes). Being wise might make it easier to accept.

Receive: What will you take from this lesson? How can you include it as part of the “moral instruction in skillful living” (Prov 1:3) that is part of the goal of our study? I want to suggest that you begin to formulate some kind of “tool-box” or “purse” to carry these ideas with you. What might that look like? Learning to be wise takes practice and should be seen more as a skill than just receiving new ideas.

Impart: Our Messiah wants us to grow in wisdom. He wants us to understand what it means to love Him and keep His commandments. He desires for us to share in His nature and to be known to others by the family characteristics of His family. He wants to create in us as individuals and families newness in how we deal with each other and what we hold as important. These lessons in Proverbs are meant to help you be better prepared to live as part of God’s family. To “shine the light” of His truth to a world in need.

How we responds when others correct us may be based upon a variety of reasons. If we are grown up, we might respond negatively because of how we were treated by our own family or friends. However, just because things have not always been easy or “fair” does not give us justification for being foolish. Just because others have not always been good examples for us (and this applies to all of us regardless of our age) is not an excuse for our bad behavior. We serve a God who teaches us to live by His standards and He teaches us that often times we “have not” because we simply have not asked Him. If we are in need of wisdom we should continue to ask God, trust Him, and then wisely keep what He gives us.

Whether you are the one giving the correction or rebuke or are the one receiving the correction or rebuke, you have something to learn from these verses of scripture. What if each lesson was a “talent?”

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.” Matthew 25:14-18