

## Proverbs 8:1-31

In chapter 7, there is a dramatic picture of an immoral woman luring a naive youth into her house at dark. Chapter 8 contrasts that with wisdom.

### Wisdom's public and persuasive invitation 8:1-11

- 1 Does not wisdom call out?  
Does not understanding raise her voice?
- 2 At the highest point along the way,  
where the paths meet, she takes her stand;
- 3 beside the gate leading into the city,  
at the entrance, she cries aloud:
- 4 "To you, O people, I call out;  
I raise my voice to all mankind.
- 5 You who are simple, gain prudence;  
you who are foolish, set your hearts on it.
- 6 Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say;  
I open my lips to speak what is right.
- 7 My mouth speaks what is true,  
for my lips detest wickedness.
- 8 All the words of my mouth are just;  
none of them is crooked or perverse.
- 9 To the discerning all of them are right;  
they are upright to those who have found knowledge.
- 10 Choose my instruction instead of silver,  
knowledge rather than choice gold,
- 11 for wisdom is more precious than rubies,  
and nothing you desire can compare with her.

Just to review: wisdom = practical knowledge. Note how in verse 4 it is for "all mankind". It's not just the intelligent who gain spiritual wisdom. In fact, what does 1 Cor. 1:20 say?

Vs. 10-11: What is the ultimate benefit of this wisdom? What are some other benefits?

### Wisdom's value to all who love her 8:12-21

- 12 "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;  
I possess knowledge and discretion.
- 13 To fear the Lord is to hate evil;  
I hate pride and arrogance,  
evil behavior and perverse speech.
- 14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine;  
I have insight, I have power.
- 15 By me kings reign  
and rulers issue decrees that are just;
- 16 by me princes govern,  
and nobles—all who rule on earth.]
- 17 I love those who love me,  
and those who seek me find me.
- 18 With me are riches and honor,  
enduring wealth and prosperity.
- 19 My fruit is better than fine gold;  
what I yield surpasses choice silver.
- 20 I walk in the way of righteousness,  
along the paths of justice,
- 21 bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me  
and making their treasuries full.

Verse 13: Note especially hates pride. Why do you think that is? What popular saying of Jesus also emphasized this truth?

Fear of the Lord = hatred of evil. How should that affect how we live? How should this affect how we interact with "evil" people?

Verse 17: Note the contrast with the previous verses. There are rich blessings for those who love and seek spiritual wisdom.

**Wisdom was active at creation 8:22-31**

22 *"The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works,  
before his deeds of old;*  
23 *I was formed long ages ago,  
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.*  
24 *When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,  
when there were no springs overflowing with water;*  
25 *before the mountains were settled in place,  
before the hills, I was given birth,*  
26 *before he made the world or its fields  
or any of the dust of the earth.*  
27 *I was there when he set the heavens in place,  
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,*  
28 *when he established the clouds above  
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,*  
29 *when he gave the sea its boundary  
so the waters would not overstep his command,  
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.*  
30 *Then I was constantly at his side.  
I was filled with delight day after day,  
rejoicing always in his presence,*  
31 *rejoicing in his whole world  
and delighting in mankind.*

V. 22 is one of the most controversial Bible passages. Much hinges on whether wisdom here is described as a personification or a person (Jesus). Many take it this way because Jesus is described as wisdom (i.e. 1 Cor. 1:24, Col. 2:3). Other passages also tell us how Jesus was active at creation (i.e. John 1:1-4). Conservative biblical scholars are divided over the question.

The controversy first arose around 300 AD. At that time, most everybody referred this to Jesus. A church leader named Arius began teaching, based on this section, that the Son was inferior to the Father because "he was brought forth" and vs. 24-25 he "was given birth". This controversy raged for many years and was the main reason for the Nicene Creed especially the phrases, "We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father".

Today, Jehovah Witnesses perpetuate the same error and often use this verse in their arguments.

"Brought me forth" – most translations translate "possess'. In the sense of a relationship. "I have a father."

"I was given birth" – if we think these verses refer to Jesus, this then would be similar to the phrase "Only Begotten". With Jesus that designates a relationship and has nothing to do with the Father being older than the Son.