

# Choose Wisdom

Proverbs 9

**Main Idea:** Wisdom invites us to pursue life with God, but Folly leads us to death; so, we choose wisdom.

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars. <sup>2</sup> She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table. <sup>3</sup> She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town, <sup>4</sup> “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks sense she says, <sup>5</sup> “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. <sup>6</sup> Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”

<sup>7</sup> Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. <sup>8</sup> Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. <sup>9</sup> Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning. <sup>10</sup> The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. <sup>11</sup> For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life. <sup>12</sup> If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

<sup>13</sup> The woman Folly is loud; she is seductive and knows nothing. <sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house; she takes a seat on the highest places of the town, <sup>15</sup> calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way, <sup>16</sup> “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” And to him who lacks sense she says, <sup>17</sup> “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” <sup>18</sup> But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

**Main Idea:** Wisdom invites us to pursue life with God, but Folly leads us to death; so, we choose wisdom.

# Chase Wisdom

1. Wisdom's invitation leads to a good life (vv. 1–6).
2. Folly's invitation leads to ruin and death (vv. 13–18).
3. You must choose which to accept (vv. 7–12).

## 1. Wisdom invites you to a good life (vv. 1–6)

Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars.<sup>2</sup> She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine; she has also set her table.<sup>3</sup> She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town,<sup>4</sup> “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who lacks sense she says,<sup>5</sup> “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.<sup>6</sup> Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”

Wisdom is personified as a righteous lady. She builds her house with “seven pillars” (v. 1).

The number seven suggests perfection and completeness.

Wisdom’s house is solid and lasting. It’s built on the solid rock.

Compare the seven-fold qualities of wisdom described by James – “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.” (Jam 3:17)

She prepares a banquet with meat and wine (vv. 2–3).

The imagery signifies a feast of abundance, joy, and life.

Wisdom doesn’t just offer words; she provides a full table.

The careful preparation suggests care for others and has worked hard, taking great effort to prepare.

Lady Wisdom makes great effort to reach those who will listen. She calls out to the “simple” (vv. 3-4). She wants to be heard.

She sends out her maidens (should remind us of Jesus sending out the disciples *US*).

Simple—inexperienced or naïve.

The invitation is grace-filled: “Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight” (v. 6). Wisdom’s call is to transformation, not merely information.



To eat and drink of her prepared feast  
To forsake foolishness and live, to go in the way of understanding  
But, Preacher, I'm not simple ... I'm wise!  
Right ... and "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall"  
(Proverbs 16:18).  
Maybe you're not completely naïve. None of us are. But, when Wisdom speaks,  
even "the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get  
guidance" (Prov 1:5).  
Don't avoid the admonition to draw near to Wisdom just because you think  
you're already wise.

## Real satisfaction requires delayed gratification.

- i. She built a solid house (v. 1; Jam 3:17).
- ii. She works hard to prepare a feast (vv. 2–3).
- iii. She wants the ‘simple’ to hear her (vv. 3-4; 16:18).
- iv. She offers a grace-filled call to be transformed (v. 6).

## Receive Wisdom's invitation.

- i. Decide to Chase wisdom. You must decide.
- ii. It's not too late. Wisdom is still waiting.
- iii. Regularly fill your mind/heart with God's Word (2:1–6).
- iv. Pursue Wisdom in community.

I can give you statistics all day long, you must decide.

I know life isn't always straightforward and it's not an easy path to walk.

It's still your choice.

## 2. Folly invites you to ruin and death (vv. 13–18)

<sup>13</sup> The woman Folly is loud; she is seductive and knows nothing. <sup>14</sup> She sits at the door of her house; she takes a seat on the highest places of the town, <sup>15</sup> calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way, <sup>16</sup> “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” And to him who lacks sense she says, <sup>17</sup> “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.” <sup>18</sup> But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Standing at the other house is Folly, personified as a woman.

Instead of standing on seven pillars of perfection, her house is flimsy and her character loud, seductive, and ignorant (v. 13).

The word “clamorous” in the original language, suggests she is noisy, restless, and undisciplined. She is “loud; she is seductive and knows nothing” (ESV); “loudmouthed, empty-headed, and brazenfaced”

She’s like the chaos monster.

She really makes no preparation

She sits at her door, shouting at those “going straight on their way” (v. 15).

Her invitation mirrors Wisdom’s (“Whoever is simple, let him turn in here”).

But there’s one key difference, her table is empty. She’s all hat and no cattle.

Note that Woman Folly cries out from a seated position (lazy?)

She sits on a high seat by the highest places of the city (v. 14).

Where Lady Wisdom also cries out (v. 3).

**She’s like a counterfeit.** Like the devil trying to imitate Christ.

She’s competing with Wisdom for the young man’s soul.

That stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant (v. 17)

“Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant” (v. 17).

An allusion to illicit intercourse (5:15).

But it is a false promise (20:17; 5:3-5).

She's offering a feast, but you get there and it's actually just *Bread and water*.  
Compared to the banquet wisdom holds, it's nothing.

The stolen nature suggests sin's deceptive thrill. It's enticing, looks fun, but ends in starvation.

Her true motive is unknown to the simple lacking understanding (v. 18).

She's tricky. She's out to get you.

Remember these are letters written to a young man.

The illustration of two women fits perfectly with what we know about young men ... they become stupid and easily deceived when talking to a beautiful woman.

Her home is the house of the dead (2:18-19)

Her house is the way to hell (5:5; 7:27)

Woman Folly promises paradise but delivers the worst life possible! Folly offers **counterfeit satisfaction**. It's like buying a rolex from the guy on the street corner, it looks cool, but in a week your wrist will turn green.

The end of Folly is deadly: "Her guests are in the depths of Sheol" (v. 18). Folly's feast leads to death.

## Foolish, instant, gratification never lasts.

- i. She is loud, seductive and knows nothing (v. 13).
- ii. Her house is flimsy; it will not last (v. 13).
- iii. Folly sits (lazy) where Wisdom stands (v. 14).
- iv. Folly offers sin's deceptive thrill (v. 17).
- v. She offers a feast but serves *bread* and *water* (vv. 15, 17).
- vi. She seeks to deceive the *simple* (v. 18; 2Co 11:13-14).

## **Folly's top 7 lies** and scriptures that tell the truth.

- i. "God is holding out on you" (Gen 3:5).
- ii. "Just follow your heart" (Jer 17:9).
- iii. "Everyone else is doing it" (Ex 23:2).
- iv. "No one will know" (Num 32:23; Ecc 12:14).
- v. "This *sin* will satisfy you" (Heb 11:25).
- vi. "You can get right tomorrow" (Jam 4:14; Pro 27:1).
- vii. "God could never love you" (Rev 12:10).

### **1. "Sin won't really hurt you."**

**Scripture:** "*You will not surely die.*" (Gen. 3:4)

**Real Life:** People convince themselves that hidden sins (pornography, dishonesty, bitterness) have no real consequences.

### **2. "You can be your own god."**

**Scripture:** "*You will be like God, knowing good and evil.*" (Gen. 3:5)

**Real Life:** Our culture worships autonomy — "follow your truth," "you do you." Pride drives people away from dependence on God.

### **3. "God's Word can't be trusted."**

**Scripture:** Satan's first tactic: "Did God actually say...?" (Gen. 3:1)

**Real Life:** Doubting the Bible's authority leads people to pick and choose morality based on feelings or trends.

### **4. "God is holding out on you."**

**Scripture:** Implicit in Gen. 3:5 — that God's commands keep you from happiness.

**Real Life:** People see God's commands about sex, money, or forgiveness as restrictive, not protective.

### **5. "Evil looks good and feels good."**

**Scripture:** "*The woman saw that the tree was good for food... a delight to the eyes.*" (Gen. 3:6)

**Real Life:** Many chase addictions, affairs, or greed because they appear attractive,

ignoring the long-term cost.

**6. “It’s just a little thing.”**

**Scripture:** *“A little leaven leavens the whole lump.”* (Gal. 5:9)

**Real Life:** Small compromises — a “white lie,” a little gossip — slowly erode character and relationships.

**7. “No one will know.”**

**Scripture:** *“Be sure your sin will find you out.”* (Num. 32:23)

**Real Life:** Secret sins (hidden spending, secret browsing, private grudges) inevitably come to light.

**8. “You can get away with it.”**

**Scripture:** *“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.”* (Gal. 6:7)

**Real Life:** People cheat in business, thinking they’ve succeeded, only to face collapse later.

**9. “This will make you free.”**

**Scripture:** Sin promises freedom but enslaves (John 8:34).

**Real Life:** Addictions begin as “freedom” (drugs, lust, money), but quickly chain the soul.

**10. “Everyone else is doing it.”**

**Scripture:** *“Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong.”* (Ex. 23:2)

**Real Life:** Peer pressure and cultural trends (sexual norms, dishonesty, cynicism) justify disobedience.

**11. “You deserve it.”**

**Scripture:** *“Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.”* (James 1:14)

**Real Life:** People indulge sin under the guise of self-care or entitlement — “I worked hard, I deserve this.”

**12. “God won’t judge you.”**

**Scripture:** *“They say to themselves, ‘The Lord will not notice.’”* (Ps. 10:11)

**Real Life:** People live as though accountability to God doesn’t exist.

**13. “Tomorrow is guaranteed.”**

**Scripture:** *“You do not know what tomorrow will bring.”* (James 4:14)

**Real Life:** Delaying repentance, assuming “I’ll deal with God later.”

**14. “This sin will satisfy you.”**

**Scripture:** *“The fleeting pleasures of sin.”* (Heb. 11:25)

**Real Life:** Pleasure is real but short-lived; it leaves emptiness and guilt.

**15. “You can serve two masters.”**

**Scripture:** *“You cannot serve God and money.”* (Matt. 6:24)

**Real Life:** People believe they can worship God and still chase idols of career, wealth, or popularity.

**16. “Your heart will never deceive you.”**

**Scripture:** *“The heart is deceitful above all things.”* (Jer. 17:9)

**Real Life:** “Follow your heart” leads people into toxic relationships, debt, or destructive choices.



**17. “You don’t need community.”**

**Scripture:** *“Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire... and breaks out against all sound judgment.”* (Prov. 18:1)

**Real Life:** People avoid accountability by withdrawing from church or hiding struggles.

**18. “It’s just physical.”**

**Scripture:** *“The body is... for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.”* (1 Cor. 6:13)

**Real Life:** Sexual sin is excused as harmless fun, ignoring the deep spiritual and relational wounds it causes.

**19. “God could never love you now.”**

**Scripture:** Satan is “the accuser of our brothers” (Rev. 12:10).

**Real Life:** After sin, people believe forgiveness is impossible, leading to despair.

**20. “There’s no hurry to choose Christ.”**

**Scripture:** *“Now is the day of salvation.”* (2 Cor. 6:2)

**Real Life:** Procrastination hardens hearts — people intend to repent “someday,” but never do.

## Decide to reject folly's invitation.

- i. Watch out for Folly's deception.
- ii. What "stolen waters" tempt you?
- iii. Trust God AND do something (James 2:14f).
- iv. Break the habit. Change your path.

The Habit Loop from "The power of Habit" by Charles Duhigg

There are three parts in a habit's cycle. One must be broken to break the habit.

**Cue:** A trigger that signals the brain to go into automatic mode, initiating the habit.

**Routine:** The behavior itself, whether physical, mental, or emotional.

**Reward:** The positive feeling or benefit the brain derives from the habit, which reinforces the loop.

**Keep the cue and reward:** The trigger and the desired benefit remain the same.

**Substitute the routine:** Replace the old behavior with a new one that provides a similar reward.

The Role of **belief** and **groups** in maintaining good habits is important.

For habits to stick, people must believe that change is possible.

Support groups like AA provide a community that strengthens this belief and reinforces new habits. This is why Church Matters. Being part of a community makes you stronger!

### 3. You must choose which to accept (vv. 7–12).

“<sup>6</sup> Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight... <sup>12</sup> If you are wise, **you are wise for yourself**; if you scoff, **you alone will bear it**... <sup>18</sup> But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.” (vv. 6, 12, 18).

Every day is a battle for your soul —  
Wisdom pulls you towards life with God,  
Folly drags you toward death and destruction.

## Recognize the difference between Wisdom/Folly.

### Chase Wisdom:

- i. Stability & justice (1:3–4).
- ii. Honor/blessing (3:16–18).
- iii. Life-giving words (6:23).
- iv. Pure & noble (31:10–31).
- v. Meat and wine (9:2).
- vi. Partners with God (8:22–31).
- vii. Speaks truth (1:7; 9:10).

### Reject Folly:

- i. Instability & secrecy (2:13–15).
- ii. Shame and ruin (5:22–23).
- iii. Seductive word (7:9–12).
- iv. Loud/shameless (7:11; 9:13).
- v. Stolen bread and water (9:17).
- vi. Death and destruction (9:18).
- vii. Lies and ignorance (9:13).

### Wisdom:

Brings life and health (3:8, 18; 9:6).  
Provides peace and security (1:33; 3:24).  
Gives discernment and guidance (2:9–11).  
Offers riches better than silver and gold (8:10–11, 18–19).  
Guards from evil paths (2:12–15).  
Strengthens relationships (3:3–4).  
Provides honor and long life (3:16).  
Fills the soul with joy (3:13–14).  
Keeps one from regret and ruin (4:5–9).  
Leads to eternal fellowship with God (8:35).

### Folly:

Promises sweetness in stolen pleasures (9:17).  
Appears exciting but ends in death (5:3–5; 9:18).  
Flatters but hides the snare (7:21–23).  
Offers shortcuts but leads to ruin (10:23).  
Mocks sin and makes light of consequences (14:9).  
Whispers secrecy but produces shame (9:17–18).  
Appeals to pride and stubbornness (15:5).

Seems easier and broader, but it's a trap (7:22–23; cf. Matt. 7:13–14).  
Leads to wasted years and sorrow (5:11–14).  
Ends in eternal separation from God (9:18).

## Choose this day whom you will follow.

- i. The Path of Life **or** the Road to Death (vv. 6, 18).
- ii. Life and blessing **or** death and curse (Deut. 30:19).
- iii. The Lord **or** false gods (Josh 24:15).
- iv. Rest and renewal **or** exhaustion and burden (Mt 11:28f).
- v. Reconciliation **or** judgement (Acts 5:20-21).

Today, say “no” to Folly’s cheap substitutes  
and “yes” to Wisdom’s abundant life (Jn 10:10).