

Prov 8:1 Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? 2 On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; 3 beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud: 4 "To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind. 5 You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain understanding. 6 Listen, for I have worthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right.

We now come to the close of the first section of Proverbs. The overall theme we have been studying is how the Lord Jesus Christ and his wisdom can build a Christian's life. Life in Christ is more than just attending church, learning the lingo of fundamentalism and developing a "church life-style." Solomon uses an interesting word-picture in Proverbs chapter 9 - that of living safely at home. Just as the home is thought of as a safe place to live, grow up and prosper, so life in Christ is the building of a Christian's life so that he can live in the home that Wisdom builds - that home is your life in Christ.

Prov 9:1 Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars. 2 She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.

Battered wives and other abused folks have refuge in what is called a "safe-house." These are homes of stable families who are willing to take in people whose lives are threatened by abusive husbands, parents. The picture is striking here. Wisdom is building a "safe-house" for the sinner who is seeking refuge from an abusive life of sin.

You see, life in Christ is not about being religious - it is about a life that is exciting, full of living, rewarding - a life that is lived in a close, personal relationship with him. It is a life that gives a Christian purpose - a friend who will stick with him through the most difficult of times. It is a life that will give him a circle of friends, a family and most of all, a life of confidence of an eternity in heaven with God's family. It is a life that is safe from the harmful results of sin.

Wisdom's call is in sharp contrast to the adulterous woman's call. The Christian is faced with two life-styles: life in Christ or the self-life. A life that builds or a life that tears down. Literally, life or death. In Christ we live. In ourselves we die. The call is that simple.

The Decision Is Ours

Prov 8:10 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.

When it comes right down to it, it's our choice. We live in a nation where God's word is right next to us. Especially in the Christian home - Yet the question is are we occupied with the word of God or does it serve only as a casual reference or help in the time of great need? There are whole nations where God's word is not readily available. In those nations the family unit is in deep trouble. Russia is paying for 70 years of oppressing the presence of the Bible with an immense drinking problem. Crime is on the increase. The very social, economic and political infrastructure in Russia is very questionable. It really comes down to choice. The challenge of the 21st century is this: will we choose Christ and his word or will we put the decision off until it is too late and we have made enough wrong decisions that our options for a fulfilling life is extremely limited or non-existent.

The Pre-eminence of Wisdom (Jesus Christ).

1 Cor 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

Here's an interesting passage. I frequently refer to Paul's statement in this passage to teach that it's not by our own righteousness that we are saved but by Christ's alone - his imputed righteousness to our account. But look at the other three points of Paul's statement. It is in Christ alone that we are sanctified (certainly not anything that we can do). It is *only* through the redemptive work of Christ that we are freed from the slave-market of sin - just as the children of Abraham were freed from Egypt and the Pharaoh by the power of the LORD alone. So why is it that we mix in our wisdom with a meager supply of his wisdom in our Christian walk instead relying *solely* on the wisdom that comes from above - Christ's Wisdom?¹ I really wonder about what is going on in our minds when we knee-jerk with our own wisdom given any circumstance or need for decision rather than going to the Lord, in prayer, and carefully seeking from his word the wisdom we need.

Then there is the lack of prioritizing our time when it comes to *learning* the word of God. How many times have we passed up on the opportunity to expose ourselves to good, solid teaching from a gifted teacher or taken the time for personal Bible study so that we can have his wisdom *ingrafted* into our hearts² in order that we *might* apply it later on when we need his wisdom?

**Prov 8:15 By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just;
16 by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth.**

¹ James 3:15 - 17

² James 1:21

It is difficult to separate Jesus Christ from his word in this passage. Jesus Christ is the king of history, his word rules history. Jesus Christ is sovereign in the affairs of men. Whether a Christian decides for Christ or not - Jesus is sovereign over his life. Even the kings and presidents are under his sovereignty. The difference is have we decided to place the Lord Jesus *and his word* first in our lives. If Jesus Christ is first then the promise is sure; Prov 8:17 **I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. 18 With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.**

There can be no separation between Jesus Christ and his word in the life of the Christian. Profession alone does not equate with the life of a Christian who is fulfilling the command of Romans 12:1, 2. The key to understanding the Christian walk is to look Christ's definition of a follower of Christ. Listen to the word of Jesus Christ himself:

Luke 6:46-49 **"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? [47] I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. [48] He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. [49] But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."**

Look at vers 49 - these poor deluded folks *thought* that a profession that Jesus was Lord was enough. Jesus makes the point very clear that obedience to his word is the mark of a true follower of Christ - one who truly builds his life on Christ and his word. **If you want to have a good life, a fulfilled life you must build your life on Jesus Christ and his word.**

Now look at verses 47 and 48. If Jesus and his word has pre-eminence in our lives - if it has first place, then the word of Christ will *build* a house (remember the word-picture earlier of the safe-house)? That house will be a place where we can safely dwell in a life of blessing from the Lord. The decision is ours - Either we will let Jesus build our lives or we will tear it down. The decision is that important.

Jesus Christ Wants to Be the Craftsman of Our Lives.

Proverbs 8:30-31 **Then I was the craftsman 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.**

Jesus as the master craftsman was not just delighted with his creation.³ He was delighted in mankind - he wants to be the craftsman of your life - just as a master craftsman wants to do nothing but the best when he builds a house - so it is with Jesus and our lives - nothing but the best for his creation - you and me. The problem is that the sinful bent in us tells us that we are the masters of our own lives - that we can do whatever we want to and that we do not need the Lord's help. Listen to the Psalmist words:

Psalm 127:1-2 A song of ascents. Of Solomon. Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. [2] In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat-- for he grants sleep to those he loves.

This is a striking picture of the issue at hand. This psalm was sung as the children of Israel were ascending the mount toward the temple of the Lord. The primary focus was the temple of God but it didn't stop there. The house here was the nation of Israel also. But let us not stop there - each family making that climb toward the temple *that the Lord built* was in another house - the house of God's blessing over that household. So, may I apply this psalm to our lives? Jesus wants to be the master craftsman of our lives - listen to Ephes. 2:10:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

The illustration of the safe-house certainly applies our lives in Christ. Unless we allow the Lord to build our lives in him - we live outside of his protection. Life is vain (empty) as the psalmist says in our passage. Let's take one more look at Proverbs 8:

Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. Proverbs 8:34

When I was a young man I made a decision to "camp" at Wisdom's doorway. I can say without reservation that the Lord and his word has protected me - literally provided a safe-house for me. He has given me a wonderful life, family and a great vocation. Truly the next verse applies to my life and I pray to yours:

For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD. Proverbs 8:35

³ Genesis 1:31-2:1 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.
[2:1] Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.