

## Dr. August Konkell, Proverbs, Session 10

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This is Dr. August Konkell and his teaching on the book of Proverbs. This is session number 10, Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly, Proverbs 9.

We come in our talk today to the conclusion of the introduction of Proverbs in Proverbs 1 to 9. And here is where we have contrasted for us very explicitly Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly, the choice that we need to make between life and death that has been presented to us all along the way. So here in this chapter, Lady Wisdom is presented to us as a householder.

And what she has done is invited guests to the feast that she has to offer. So, she has prepared her banquet hall which is supported by seven pillars. Seven of course is always the number of completeness and not too much more than that should be made of the numbers here.

It's just suggesting that this is a really great hall. If you have a large building in order to support the roof, you've got to put pillars along the way so that the roof is held up. And so, Lady Wisdom's banquet hall is big enough so that everybody can come.

She's got her menu prepared. She's poured her wine. She's slaughtered her calf.

Of course, in ancient times, meat was preserved on the hoof. You kept the animal alive until such time as you were ready to make it food. And I might add that in most of the world, that same policy has been followed to this very day.

I have been in India and I know how they prepare their chickens. They catch them when they're ready to eat them. She's gotten her servers.

She's given them all of their instructions. And now she appeals to the guests. And who are the guests? Well, these are the ones who need to gain sense.

As she says it here, they lack a little in thinking. Their knowledge is not quite up to speed. And they should come to her and they will find food and they will find wine and they will walk in the way of understanding.

Now what then is this work of wisdom? Well, this work of wisdom is next described in these verses. Don't answer a fool according to their folly. We're going to spend a whole lecture in Proverbs chapter 26, where we will have a lot more to say about fools and a lot more to say about Proverbs.

But the point essentially is this, you cannot reason with the irrational. Another way to say this is, that you cannot teach something to someone who's in no position to

learn it or doesn't want to learn it, is refusing to learn it. If you try to reason with the irrational, you will yourself become irrational and you will turn yourself into a fool.

So, if you try to teach someone who has already determined that the premises from which you work are wrong, all you're going to get is scoffing. Now the best example I can give of that in my context as an instructor within the university setting, though I actually work in the seminary, is our fundamental notion of epistemology, that is how we know. Now what is the premise of modernism by which the university professors operate and especially by which their science operates almost exclusively? The premise of knowledge is this, all we are able to know comes through our senses and is processed by reason which we possess.

Essentially it goes back to a philosopher by the name of Immanuel Kant. And if anything is outside of that definition, it's just foolishness, it's just dismissed out of hand. Now what kind of premise of knowledge is that? Who is to say that the only way you can ever receive knowledge is through your five senses? Why I can tell you of all sorts of people who have demonstrated that they know things that they could have never received through their five senses.

But of course, I don't ever share those stories with my intellectual friends who have already decided, oh that's just psychological aberration, those people are a little on the cuckoo side, you know, maybe they've been eating too many mushrooms of the wrong sort. And so, you get into a debate with them and pretty soon you're talking foolishness just like they talk foolishness. You have to understand, look we're on two different premises here.

You've made a religious decision. Your religious decision is that the only kind of knowledge you can have is your senses and your reason. And I say no, I know and have plenty of evidence for the fact that there is a knowledge that can be received quite outside of that.

And fundamentally the testimony to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ is one of those. But of course, you can dismiss that in all sorts of ways. So instruct a scoffer, all you're going to get is insult.

Be careful. Wisdom is a lifelong process. This is what we learn in verses nine and ten.

Live with integrity and you'll be secure. Stay away from the ways of perversity and crookedness. That which is the winking of the eye is going to bring itzabom.

It's going to bring etzev. It's going to bring pain. This is one of those places where that word pain is used.

When you live with deception you're going to bring pain. So, wisdom must begin with the knowledge of the holy. By the way, the word that's used here is simply the word qodeshim.

It's the word that means holiness. It's the word that of referring to God and the fundamental thing about the word qodeshim as being used for God is to say that he is the one who is separate. And what that means is that God is in no sense dependent on creation.

Rather God is the source of creation. Now you see there is that fundamental difference that I was talking about earlier. If you believe, if you understand, and recognize that there is something that gives life to the universe.

Life doesn't just belong to the universe but something that is separate from the universe that gives life to it. Then of course there is knowledge that is just outside of simply what we may perceive and rationalize. And that in Hebrew is expressed with the word qadosh.

And so God is referred to as qadosh. Who is this Yahweh that they refer to by name? Who is this? Well, he's the one who is outside of the universe. He is qadosh and he is the one who gives wisdom that alone has the potential for a full life.

Character has its consequences. Wisdom is first. Pursue wisdom for your benefit, your own benefit.

The worst harm of a foolish is inevitably to the fool. And the fool is seduced. Now what is the seduction that occurs mostly in our context? It is the seduction of our own self-aggrandizement.

Our own belief is that we can be as God knowing good and evil. That is the great seduction. It is the great seduction that especially in the modern era kind of had its roots in the Enlightenment but came to fruition in the era of deism and the development of rationalism.

And this description of Lady Folly describes that sort of seduction. The seduction that we are at the center of all things in our own God describes it perfectly. And where is Lady Folly? In the most public places.

In our modern context of course it's the places of education. It's the places of high society. It's in all the high places.

And Lady Folly is out there and she's beckoning and she's alluring and she's saying this is where you're going to find the greatness of humanity. This is where you're

going to find the goodness of life. And who does she seduce? Well, it's those who really don't have good sense.

As a matter of fact, the notion that humans are the greatest thing in the universe is really a sort of a pathetic one. What makes us think that we are the greatest things in the universe? Now we may deny that that's what we think but that is unquestionably the way we behave. In our public places.

We are the greatest things in the universe and we are going to find out who else is in the universe. We're going to find out what else there is in the universe. We're going to find out all the secrets of the universe itself.

There is nothing greater in the universe than us. But really this is stolen water. And of course, we know that from Revelation.

Don't take part in that Tree of Knowledge. That is theft. And the wisdom writer here describes later as folly.

And she's saying she offers you all of this. All of this great thinking about yourself. All of this thinking that you're like God and you know good and evil.

Stolen. Stolen. You think it's delicious.

You think that it really is a thrill. You think that it provides all that you could be looking for. But it's deception.

Promiscuity. The following of this false god is not going to be what is satisfying. You know the ancient festivals of the Greeks were orgies.

These symposia of philosophies. Philosophers. And we just really have our own versions of this very same kind of thing where we celebrate what we think is our greatness.

All the guests of Lady Folly end up in the same place. In the depths of Sheol is where her guests are going to be found. That's the place of the dead.

Humanity does not provide life to itself. And following these ways of folly as if we could save ourselves is going to prove to be foolishness. So ends the introduction.

Here is the banquet. Here is the orgy. The celebration of self-esteem and self-achievement.

Here's life and here's the way that leads to destruction and death. That's the fear of God. It's the beginning.

Here's the choice you have to make as we begin our next talk. We're going to begin with the collections of the Proverbs themselves which say, okay, if you're going to learn wisdom, what is it you need to know? And we're going to spend the rest of our talks on Proverbs thinking about what is this wisdom that you need to know.

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