

Children of God, more than one persons has noted the truth of the phrase, You are what you eat. And here in Proverbs King Solomon personifies Wisdom as a Lady – Lady Wisdom, we shall call her, and he personifies Foolishness as an Adulteress – Dame Folly is her name. And both Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly are hosting a feast. And you are the guest of honor. Now, what you eat, or rather, whose table you eat at, is a metaphor for how you are living your life. You are either going to heed the call of Wisdom, and eat at her table, and live; or you are going to heed the call of Folly, and eat at her table and die?

Wisdom's Feast

The chapter is broken up into three sections. The first section is dedicated to Lady Wisdom and her feast. The Second Section is an examination on how you know if you are wise or not, and then the third section describes the Feast of Dame Folly. We are going to look at the sections 1 and 3 first and compare and contrast the feasts, and then we will look at section 2 and examine ourselves to see if we are foolish or wise.

First off, we are told about Lady Wisdom's **Feasting House**. *Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars*. The number seven signify the number of days in the creation week, and thus signifies completion. The whole created order, therefore, is Wisdom's house. That means there are going to be natural laws at work which Wisdom has put in place in order to govern her house. And if one is to live in conformity, and in harmony within her house they are going to have to abide by her built-in natural laws and order. For that is much of what Wisdom is, know what the natural laws are that God has built into the moral fabric of the Universe, and abiding by them.

But secondly, Wisdom's house is also the Church, which is upheld by the Seven Fold Spirit of God. Christ is the Wisdom of God, and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ. And so His house,

which is also His body, is the Church. And this we know because of the food that she serves.

She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, and she says in v. 5 *Come eat of my bread.* Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, sacrificed to take away the sins of the world, He is the Bread of Life, and His Wine is the Blood of the Covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

So right away, we can derive from this that to pursue Lady Wisdom and to eat in her house, one should seek to conform their lives with laws of nature and of Nature's God, and also find their life in the Church and take part in her feasts.

The next point is to notice the **Preparation – vs 2.**

She slaughtered her beast, mixed her wine, and set her table. Lady Wisdom has done everything to prepare for us. She is a busy and hard working and industrious woman. She thinks ahead, she plans her meals, she researches recipes. She takes hospitality seriously. She cares for her guests and respects them, and that respect is shown in her preparation. And so, once all is ready, she issues forth the invitation to the feast.

Invitation: 9:3-5: *She has sent out her young women to call from the highest places in the town.* She has young women, which suggests that her intention is to reach as many people as possible. She intends to be heard. She wants people to come to the feast.

And she also sends her young women *to the highest places in town.* Greater publicity is needed for such a great message. She wants to ensure that people from all walks of life hear the invitation.

Also, take notice of who Wisdom invites: The Simple, gullible, and naïve, the untested. In Hebrew, the word for simple literally means “open-minded.” It refers to the person who is open to influence, whether good

or bad. He has no ability to discriminate the one from the other. He is gullible.¹

This reminds us of Christ' parable of the Great Banquet in Luke 14 when he tells his servants to go out to the streets and the lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame. And then there was still room, so the Master commanded his servants to go out to highways and the hedges and compel people to come in, that his house would be filled.

Whether the people are poor and crippled and blind and lame, as in Luke, or they are simple, naïve, ignorant, and gullible, these are spiritual qualities, as well as physical. These are people who cannot help themselves.

Now the question we then ask ourselves is, if the people that Wisdom calls to her feast are simple, and naïve, and gullible, how many of these people actually know that they are simple, gullible, and naïve? And, how many would be willing to admit it?

You see, in order to heed wisdom's call, you must first of all, not think too highly of yourself. Remember 1 Corinthians says: For consider your calling, brothers, not many were wise ²⁶*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty...*"

The meaning of this is that God gives grace to the humble, but He opposes the proud. Those who are full of themselves and think they know everything and they don't need anybody's help or instruction, these are

¹ The Christian Counselors NT and Proverbs, Jay Adams, pg. 535, note 4.

the wise according to the flesh, these are those that Solomon would call “fools.” If you say you are blind you can actually see, but if you say you see, you are actually blind. If you are going to be open to Wisdom’s cry, then put on humility and be quick to listen and slow to speak.

Now what does Wisdom cry out from the high places? What is her invitation?

Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.

This is very much like what God says in Isaiah 55 –

*“Ho! Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.
²Why do you spend money for what is not bread,
And your wages for what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
And let your soul delight itself in abundance.
³Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live;*

Which is also the gist of Rev. 3:20 when Jesus says:

²⁰Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

The point here, children of God, is that Wisdom’s call and invitation to feast with her is a call to heed the words of God. To obey God’s word and to come to Jesus, is the essence of what we are getting at here in all this talk about eating and drinking. For as we have seen in the past weeks in

Gospel readings, Jesus is the True Bread of Life, to teach us that we do not live by Bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

And so, what is the **Result** of feasting with Lady Wisdom? What is the result of living your life in obedience toward the Wisdom of God, the natural laws of the universe and the revealed Word of God in the Scriptures?

Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the ways of insight.

When you feast with Wisdom in her house, and learn to listen to the word of God and feast upon her sacred meals, the simple and naïve and the blind gain genuine insight into God's ways, and the ways of the world. This insight enables one to discriminate righteously about what is true and good and right and beautiful and wise in the world, and they can learn how to live and walk in the ways of that insight. That is what the Feast of Lady Wisdom offers to you.

Now we will contrast the Feast of Lady Wisdom with the Feast of Dame Folly.

Folly's Feast

The first thing it says about Dame Folly is that *she is loud*. You know the type. She is clamorous, boastful, noisy, she is a drama queen, she is always making a fuss, and being a distraction, she wants all eyes on her, she craves attention. Dame Folly is that girl. I mean, Solomon could've stopped right there, and 90% of dudes would've been like, Oh, her!!!! And walked right into church.

Ladies, Do not be that woman. Do not be loud. A gentle and quiet spirit is very precious in God's sight, and is also very attractive to men. Do not be a loud woman.

She is simple and knows nothing, Solomon says. Unlike Wisdom who crafted the Universe and whose nature is the fabric of the universe, Dame Folly is naïve and simple, just like the ones she cries out to. She knows nothing. She is ignorant of her own ignorance. She thinks she knows everything, but actually knows nothing. With her, it is quite literally the blind leading the blind. She is the one that has to make a comment about everything, but in reality knows nothing of what she speaks. Don't be like that. Speak only about the things you know about, and be willing to learn with humble spirit.

What Preparation does she do? *She sits at the door of her house; she takes her seat on the highest places of the town* – First off, Dame Folly is lazy. She sits and does nothing. She doesn't prepare for the feast, she has no industry at all. Lady Wisdom created the Universe, she knows how to have a feast. Lady Wisdom slaughtered her beast, baked her bread, mixed her wine, set the table, got everything ready. She is well thought out and prepared.

But Dame Folly is ignorant and knows nothing, and doesn't have the slightest clue as to how to even prepare a meal. She doesn't study up on how to cook, or how to prepare meals, she isn't ready for guests in her house. She hasn't cleaned her home. She knows nothing about the domestic duties of a woman. She hasn't slaughtered her beasts, or baked her bread or mixed her wine.

In fact, according to v. 17 she stole her bread and water. She has no industry, she is greedy and lazy, and steals to get what she wants, because she doesn't know how to cook. Men, why would you even be interested in woman who doesn't know how to cook? And Ladies, don't even think you can attract a man if you don't know how to cook. That is some practical wisdom, right there.

Also notice this: Dame Folly doesn't know or maybe doesn't care that her place is supposed to be in the home. It says she leaves the home and goes by herself into the town.

In contrast to her, Psalm 128 says that the blessed man has a wife who is like a fruitful vine within your house. A woman who runs the streets is not wife material.

Dame Folly doesn't send out invitations, she doesn't send out maids to call from the highest places in the town. She has no real good strategy except she yells those who pass by her, who are about their own business.

In fact, she calls out to those who are going straight on their way. The Straight way, if you remember the importance of that phrase from the Gospel of Mark. She is calling out to folks like us. She already has the wicked, it's those who are on the straightway she is calling out to. You can imagine a prostitute calling out to passing men, saying Hey Baby, come over here. Yeah, that's her.

But notice this, which is really interesting. Her invitation is the exact same thing Lady Wisdom says. "*Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!*"

That means, both Wisdom and Folly are both looking to bring in the immature, and naïve, and simple, and open-minded, un-discerning to feast with them. Lady Wisdom has her feast prepared, but what does Dame Folly offer?

He says to him who lacks sense: "*Stolen water is sweet, and bread in secret is pleasant.*" What she is saying is Legitimate needs are better satisfied through illegitimate ways. What do I mean? God made us hungry, and he desires that we eat to satisfy our hunger. But he also says we are to work for our food. That is legitimate and good way to feed ourselves and satisfy our God given hunger.

Folly says, hey, you're hungry, just steal some bread. Why do the hard work for it, why waste the energy? Just steal it.

God wants us to sit at a table with friends and family and eat, and laugh and rejoice; but Folly is ducking down dark alleys crouching behind trash cans eating her bread and drinking her stolen water in secret. "Its better this way" she says.

Stolen water is referring to sexual relations in chp. 5. Drink water from our own cistern and well, Solomon says, by which he means to be satisfied with our spouse.

Sex outside of the covenant of marriage is like pouring your clean water all over the street, it is a waste, on the one hand, because in an age when where there was no water sanitation, clean water was at a premium. But on the other hand it is like eating scraps from the garbage dump that have flies and maggots all over it and is all moldy and gross and putrefied and smells like during the mid-summer heat.

Would you rather sit down at a home cooked meal with your spouse and eat healthy food that was prepared in love, and have good conversation and peace around your table, or would you rather eat out of the hot dumpster in the dark back alley with some adulteress, picking through maggots and swatting away flies and smelling garbage? That is the image here.

Now, what is the Result: v. 18 – *But he (the naïve man) does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Hell.* When the naïve man goes and feasts with Dame Folly, his feet follow hers to down to death, to the paths of Hell. She dines with the dead. The spirits of lost souls from ages past commune at her table. In Proverbs 7 Solomon says this about her:

²⁴Now therefore, listen to me, my sons;
 Pay attention to the words of my mouth:
²⁵Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,
 Do not stray into her paths;
²⁶For she has cast down many wounded,
 And all who were slain by her were strong men.
²⁷Her house is the way to hell,
 Descending to the chambers of death.

I imagine a scene in a movie where a young man is lead by the hand into her house and as he crosses the threshold of her house looks around the room, and sees the bones of men scattered everywhere, the armor of the mightiest of them scattered about. And by the time he realizes he is in a trap, it's too late, the doors shut behind him, the camera pulls away from the house and all you hear is him scream. He is never to be seen again.

Now Dame Folly is the personification of Foolishness in general, but she especially exhibits the dangers of committing sexual immorality and adultery. And so young men, you are to flee youthful lusts which wage war against your soul, and seek instead the wife of your youth. Be satisfied with her always. And you will live. Choose Dame Folly, and you are dead.

Wise or Fool?

Now I addressed the contrast between Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly and their respective feasts. And there are many things to glean from them both. But the essence of this extended metaphor is to get us to choose between the way of Wisdom or the way of Folly. And this leads us to our middle section in v. 7-12, where we can start to take some spiritual inventory and see what kind of people we are. Are we Wise, or are we Fools? Whose table do we eat at? And we are given a kind of test to examine ourselves and see.

Examination - v. 7-12

There are three statements about the fool, and three statements about the wise. And as we read them we should think to ourselves, do I act like the fool? Do I act like the scoffer, or do I act like the wise and righteous man?

And here are the three statements for each:

⁷*“He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself,
And he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself.*

⁸*Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you;*

Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.

⁹*Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser;
Teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.*

How do you respond when someone comes to you with wisdom and counsel? Are you the kind of person that scoffs at what the other person says? Do you re-direct the focus of the conversation onto the other person? Do you start calling other people names or start pointing out other peoples' faults? Do you lash out on people and hate them and get angry with them? When the wise reproves a wicked man he incurs injury – why? Because he is viewed as an enemy. Do you consider those who love you and who would instruct you as your enemy?

Do you lash out who are seeking your welfare? Do you respond to correction by dismissing that person? Do you get mad at the person who genuinely wants to help you? If that is how you respond to correction, or instruction, or guidance, or insight, then you are a Fool.

Likewise, if you are the person who is trying to give counsel, if you are trying to correct a person, and this is how they respond to you, you need to learn when to call it quits and stop casting your pearls before swine. There is a time to stop giving counsel and just let the person crash.

And here is a good way to figure this out if you are a fool. Look at your life. Do you have all sorts of trouble and drama? Is your marriage a mess? Is your family and home life constant drama and fighting? Do you feel like things just aren't working out for you? Are you making decisions that you think are going to benefit you but only seem to create ever more stress and anxiety for you? If you are that kind of person, you will usually also be a person who complains a lot about your life to someone else.

Eventually that person that you complain to, if they are a good and wise person, they will offer you advice. They will seek to counsel you. Now ask yourself – do you listen to them? Or do you dismiss them? Why are you griping and complaining? Is it just to vent and complain, or are you looking for help?

If you have all these problems, but you are not looking for help, but are only interested in complaining, then do you think you can fix your problems on your own – the same problems that you created – You are now going to fix with the same solutions that got you into this mess in the first place? C'mon!

You know what the definition of insanity is, don't you? Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. If your life is a mess, and you are not seeking counsel, and you are not listening to those people in your life who love you the most and who care for you and who have a lot of wisdom and experience, then you are a fool, and you are destined to drink the effects of your foolishness down the dregs.

In contrast to that, a wise man does not hate, harm, or seek to shame a person who rebukes or corrects him. He loves the person who tells him he is playing the fool.

When someone has the guts to tell you are messing up and doing things that are wrong – the wise person justify himself. Instead, they say, thank you, and consider if what they are being told is true. In fact, a wise person

will assume what their friends are saying is true, then they will even go to another person and ask for verification. Hey, someone told me I was acting this way – is this true? Get a second witness. Don't go and talk to the second person and talk crap about the first person who confronted you. That is foolishness. Instead, listen to the first person, seek confirmation from another witness or two, and then seek counsel about how to change your life if you don't know how.

One of the tasks that I was required to do at seminary for my Pastoral Administration class was to ask my friends what they thought about me, what were my strengths and weaknesses and where I often fail, and what they perceive to be things in my personality that they consider negatives, and I had to listen to them without interrupting or defending myself. That is very painful experience, especially when you have as many faults as I do. But it is a most wholesome and good exercise, and has been an important part of my own personal growth and self knowledge, and I recommend that you go through something like that too. It keeps you humble, which means it keep you trusting in God and listening to him, and not yourself.

Now, the kind of person you are, either foolish, or wise, is determined by your first principles.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,

And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

If you fear the Lord, you have the beginning of wisdom. If you care more about what God says, than your own opinions or the opinions of the world, and if you are more afraid to sin against God than to give satisfaction to your own lusts, then you have the beginning of wisdom.

Likewise, true understanding is found in knowledge of God and of Christ. If you are not at some level learning theology, learning about who God is, what His nature and character and attributes are, how He works

in the world with His people, and the nature of covenants and sacraments, then you will not have understanding, and you will be a fool.

Most of what passes today for theology and Bible study is very little examination of the text of Scripture and studying who God is, and is more about peoples feeling and emotions about what they think of God. Which are not at all even close to be the same thing. If you want to be a wise person, if you want to understand God and yourself and the world, then you need to learn theology.

Yes, that includes you too Ladies. If you are going to be Wise Women, and raise wise children, and give wise counsel to your husband so he can also be wise, then you need to know the Scriptures, and you need to know who God is. Nothing is more practical than a knowledge of the Holy One.

And then it seems that Wisdom speaks here directly to us and she says,
For by me your days will be multiplied, years add to your life.

So, one of the blessings of God is to have long life. Now like all of Proverbs these are general statements and not always true in every circumstance. But if you follow God's laws and live in accordance with the laws of nature and Nature's God, you will have a long life and experience God's blessings. Such are the blessings of Wisdom.

And finally, she says - *If you are wise, you are wise for yourself. If you scoff, you alone will bear it.* All that to say, You are not hurting anyone else by your foolishness. The person who has been correcting you, whom you have been scoffing and ignoring, they most likely will not bear the brunt of your foolishness. You will bear it alone. The wise person doesn't tell you these things for their own benefit. They tell you for yours. They don't get

anything out of it except to see you blessed. And that is enough for the wise.

And for the wise, they don't seek out wisdom to please other people, they do it for themselves. Why make life any more difficult for yourself than it already natural is? Wisdom is like learning how to navigate the turbulent waves of this troublesome world with skill. We pursue wisdom because it brings us into greater harmony with the way God has made the world.

Conclusion:

So which table will you eat from? Who will you follow? Who will you imitate? How will you walk? Will you choose to listen to Lady Wisdom, and inherit life? Or Dame Folly, and go to hell? The choice is yours. You are what you eat. Amen.