

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

First Quarter 2015: *Proverbs*

Lesson 4 “Divine Wisdom”

Read for this week’s study

Prov. 8:1–21; Matt. 16:26; Prov. 8:22–31; Gen. 1:31; Prov. 8:32–36; Prov. 9:1–18.

Memory Text

“The LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old” (Proverbs 8:22, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Wisdom Cries Out
- III. Wisdom and Creation
- IV. Rejoicing in Creation
- V. Wisdom’s Appeal
- VI. Either/Or
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

A. Introduction (8:32-36)

Proverbs is a two-toned, black and white book in which almost everything seems “cut and dried” with few surprises for honest and hard workers. Every course of action, every habit is either good or bad, wise or foolish. The person who is good is wise; the one who is bad is foolish. **Is it possible to have fools who are righteous or wicked who are wise? Why?**

B. Lady Wisdom and her maidens (8:1-12)

1. Wisdom assumes an active role. She goes out in the street near the city gate and says to the young men going by, “Come over to my house, I’ve got something for you. Come learn from me and I will teach you and show you how to live your life. You will get something better than gold.” **Why does she need to shout?**
2. She plans a party and sets out food. Her maidens go out and invite young men to come to eat the food, drink the wine, and forsake foolishness in order to get understanding. **What about advertising wisdom by offering a nice meal with a**

beautiful lady in her house? Would this type of advertisement on billboards in front of educational institutions work today?

C. A Marketing-Skills Contest (9:13-18)

1. Teaching by contrasts is very effective. While Lady Folly and Lady Wisdom speak in a similar way, the two ladies can be contrasted as follows:

WISDOM	FOLLY
Builds her house on seven pillars	Takes advantage of others' work
Serves her food and drink	Serves stolen bread and water
Calls people to make choices	Tells people to have "fun"
She is humble	She is selfish
Her path leads to a life of blessings	Her path leads to pain and death

Which of the two women is more successful in getting the attention of young men? Why?

2. Lady Folly has her banquet ready (just like Lady Wisdom). Her bread is sweet but it is stolen. It is not hers; it actually belongs to somebody else. Eating her tasty food participates in her theft. Stolen bread tastes sweet but is very dangerous!
Can you think of some examples when perhaps practical values are stolen and used for evil ends that lead to destruction?

D. Divine Side of Wisdom (8:22-31)

1. Wisdom has been the Creator's companion from the beginning. Archaeologists have uncovered in Israel a number of figurines of a female deity who may have been viewed as God's consort during certain periods of Israel's history. **Do the books of the Bible present any lady as God's consort? Did the God of Israel have a female consort like the deities of the surrounding nations?**
2. She is older than the Universe. Who is she? Possible answers include: The Truth, the Torah, joy and happiness, salvation, Christ (PP 34), Holy Spirit, the Creator Himself. **Which answer(s) do you favor?**
3. **Is it possible that to the author, what she does is more important than who she is?**

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Was the Sabbath given to man before or after sin?

That's on this planet. Should we be so limited in our view? How about in the universe?

When was the war up in heaven? Did they not meet the adversary in the Garden? He was already the enemy of God and man. Everything given during creation week was an emergency

measure, added because of sin. We were given that first Sabbath—in fact, we were visitors that first Sabbath, as you know.

The second one was our first seventh day, wasn't it, really? The second one. The first one was when the Lord and His children throughout the universe, the watching angels, celebrated what God had done that week—the beauty of it all, the unselfishness of it all, the freedom. He even allowed the adversary to approach the two. Think of doing that! But God did not let them be tested more than they were able to bear. Satan could only meet them at the tree, which was not so much a test of obedience as a provision to protect them, just as the law could be seen as a test of obedience, or as something to protect us, you see.

So right away those provisions—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—could be viewed as part of the *paidagogos* to protect us, to guard us. If they had been obedient to the law, in the Garden, right away, and not gone to the tree, they would not have confronted their wily foe, and collapsed as they did. It wasn't given to deprive them of freedom, but to protect their freedom.

And then, on Friday creating a man and a woman, and God sharing His creative power with us, so that we could actually share in this incredible experience of creating little people in our own image. God had been accused of being selfish in this regard, by the one who *wanted to be* God, and create, but couldn't, because he was only a creature. Think of all the things said about God during creation week. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians*, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

When we read that first angel's message to worship the Creator of the heaven and earth, the Creator of the sea and springs, perhaps we are reminded that the first mention of the Sabbath comes in the Bible at the end of creation week. I wonder if tonight we could think back in imagination to the very dramatic events of that first week of this earth's history. The war had begun already up in Heaven. Satan had already leveled his charges and his accusations. One third of the angels had already agreed with him that God is not worthy of our love and our trust. Right in the middle of that devastating crisis, God invites His family to watch Him as He creates yet another world, this time ours. How easily He could have created our world with a snap of His fingers, in just an instant of time. But in the dramatic and significant setting of the great controversy, He chose, this time, to do it in six 24-hour days. On the first day, all He said was, "Let there be light." That's all. And then day two, three, four, five as God in unhurried majesty and drama unfolded His plans for our earth. By the sixth day, what a beautiful place this was. Where now were Satan's charges that God was selfish? Look at the freedom. He created us in His own image with power to think and to do. And we know from human history

that He created us free to either love and trust Him or hate Him and spit in His face, because it has been done. He created us able to do it. God even allowed Satan to approach our first parents at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And He didn't hide that tree in some dark corner of the Garden; He put it right in the middle near the Tree of Life, so that Adam and Even would see it every time they came to that other tree. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, session 10, "The Reminder of the Evidence" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>*

As the apostle Paul explains, law was added because of wrongdoing and transgression. (See Galatians 3:19) Actually, what God wants most for his children—peace, love, happiness and trusting friendship—cannot be produced by legislation, much less by force or fear. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord. (Zechariah 3:4) Only by the way the Spirit works—the Spirit of love and truth—can people be persuaded of their own free will to give God what he wants.

You can force people to be your servants. But you cannot compel them to be your friends.

I wish the disciples had asked Jesus there in the upper room to explain his extensive use of law. It seems such a contradiction of experience and common sense to command people to love God and to love each other. Yet just before and just after his offer of friendship in John 15:15, he repeated the command to love. "This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you." "This is my commandment to you: love one another." (John 15:12, 17, REB)

Then Jesus added on that same occasion, "You are my friends if you do what I command you." (John 15:14) Did you ever try that on someone you wanted to be your friend?

What would have happened when you were a child in school, if you had walked up to a fellow student and said, "You can be my friend, as long as you do what I say"? If this is your idea of friendship, I'd be surprised if you have many friends. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 22-23. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter2.html>

Further Study with Ellen White

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. {1SM 338.2}

Those who know Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour have the privilege of being educated and trained in a higher school than that of men, and of being tutored under higher wisdom than that of finite beings. They may come under the tutorship of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew, and partake of the same knowledge that He gave to Daniel. Those who are humble in heart, those who feel their need of higher wisdom and do not rely upon their own finite judgment, but search earnestly to know the will of God, may draw from the Source of all knowledge, and obtain grace, prudence, discretion, and judgment. They will realize the fulfillment of the assurance of God's Word: "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130). {TMK 126.4}

The subtlety of Satan will not decrease, but the wisdom given to men through a living connection with the Source of all light and divine knowledge will be proportionate to his arts and wiles. {FLB 312.6}

Jesus declares that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. The Holy Spirit understands man's every necessity. He will bestow upon the earnest seeker that for which he hungers and thirsts. The blessings that God has to bestow are unlimited. We cannot comprehend their height and depth and breadth. All heaven is at the command of those who, realizing their lack of wisdom, come directly to the source of wisdom. {HP 294.4}

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

In those who possess it, the religion of Christ will reveal itself as a vitalizing, pervading principle, a living, working, spiritual energy. There will be manifest the freshness and power and joyousness of perpetual youth. The heart that receives the word of God is not as a pool that evaporates, not like a broken cistern that loses its treasure. It is like the mountain stream fed by unfailing springs, whose cool, sparkling waters leap from rock to rock, refreshing the weary, the thirsty, the heavy laden. {COL 130.1}

Angels from the world of light will be with those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance. {SC 91.1}

Every human being, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. The men in whom this power is developed are the men who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprise, and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought. Instead of confining their study to that which men have said or written, let students be directed to the sources of truth, to the vast fields opened for research in nature and revelation. Let them contemplate the great facts of duty and destiny, and the mind will expand and strengthen. Instead of educated weaklings, institutions of learning may send forth men strong to think and to act, men who are masters and not slaves of circumstances, men who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions. {Ed 17.2}

As we cherish and obey the promptings of the Spirit, our hearts are enlarged to receive more and more of His power, and to do more and better work. Dormant energies are aroused, and palsied faculties receive new life. {RC 156.2}

The humble worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To accept so great and holy a responsibility is itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental and spiritual powers, and strengthens and purifies the mind and heart. Through faith in the power of God, it is wonderful how strong a weak man may become, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. {RC 156.3}

He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive. The more one tries to explain the Word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have. {RC 156.4}

Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 354-355. {RC 156.7}