

**Wisdom's Worldwide Warning**

(1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5) & Proverbs 1:20-33

*“Heavenly Father, give your servants wisdom and discernment that we may distinguish between right and wrong according to your Word. By Your Holy Spirit, may we see the fullness of Your wisdom revealed in the Person and work of Your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, Who is our Wisdom FOR us, in Whom we pray.”*  
AMEN.

I like to be right; don't you? I get embarrassed when I am wrong about something, and I sure do not like admitting when I am wrong. What is even worse for me, because it attacks my pride and arrogance, is when people tell me that I am wrong...and they are correct. When it becomes obvious that I was wrong about a fact, in order to save face, I have made up excuses for “misunderstanding” the questions or situation. That is not only foolish of me but arrogant. We will discover in Proverbs that wisdom and humility properly go together. However, I have found that there are times when I have been so firm about what I believe to be right; of what I consider to be true, that I have refused to: 1<sup>st</sup>) listen to, or even tolerate, anything that would challenge my perspective, and 2<sup>nd</sup>) research the matter to learn more about what I believe and to test its validity.

None of us is immune to this, and it is called “willful ignorance”. Willful ignorance can be defined as, “A decision in bad faith to avoid becoming informed about something so as to avoid having to make undesirable decisions that such information might prompt.” It can also be called “denialism” or “tactical stupidity.” Another definition of “willful ignorance” is “the state and practice of ignoring any sensory input that appears to contradict one's inner model of reality. At heart, it is almost certainly driven by confirmation bias which is our tendency to (consciously or *unconsciously*) seek out information that conforms to our pre-existing view points, and subsequently ignore information that goes against them, both positive and negative.” As humans, we are born with the sinful inclination to ignore many great things about God and His Creation; things radiantly before us that we simply close our eyes to; because, we want to be our own gods and our own arbiters of subjectively defined truth. Not only are we born inclined to willfully ignore God's revelation of Himself in creation, but, we are just as masterful at ignoring what He has revealed of Himself in the special or specific revelation recorded in the Bible.

Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, Tim Kaine, provides us with an example of willful ignorance of the Bible when he spoke at the 20th Annual Human Rights Campaign National Dinner in 2016. As a professing Roman Catholic, he stated that he believes the Roman Catholic Church will change its stance on same-sex marriage “because my church also teaches me about a creator who, in the first chapter of Genesis, surveyed the entire world, including mankind, and said, ‘It is very good.’ Who am I to challenge God for the beautiful diversity of the human family? I think we’re supposed to celebrate it, not challenge it.” Do you see his willful ignorance; his refusal to read two more chapters in Genesis and acknowledge that something happened after creation called the Fall that disrupted and corrupted that which God had made good? Ryan Welsh in an on-line article about this further highlighted that Kaine appeared to “willfully ignore” what Paul says in *Romans 1:24-27* (Note the context of verses 18-32 is God handing humanity over to our refusal to acknowledge him). Is this “tactical stupidity”? Was this a decision in bad faith to avoid becoming informed about something, so he could avoid having to make undesirable decisions that such information might prompt.” I don’t know Kaine’s heart, but, if he was “willfully ignorant” then helps paint the portrait of the “fool”, at least according to the same Bible Kaine referenced. And, the portrait of the fool is in stark contrast to the portrait of Wisdom and of those who possess Her.

Proverbs 1-9 which introduces the entire Book of Proverbs with a “Portrait of Wisdom” and with “Warnings Against Her Detractors; one of which is “Folly”. Wisdom is personified as a Woman; because, the Hebrew word for Wisdom is feminine. We see the fullness of Wisdom’s portrait and personification in Proverbs 8. At this point, however, it is worth noting that I believe the personification of Wisdom is more than just a literary device. Wisdom is an attribute of God, and Wisdom is essential for living in the world, which Wisdom had a part in creating. Mike Heiser helpfully articulates this in an interesting “Bible Study Magazine” article entitled “God’s Right-Handed Woman”. Let me paraphrase him, “...the idea of personified Wisdom as a woman [comes] from the book of Proverbs. While the term most often refers to practical, insightful living according to God’s law, the writer of Proverbs at times portrays Wisdom as a woman. But, what is especially remarkable about Wisdom in passages such as Proverbs 3:19 and 8:22-30, for example, she is described as God’s co-creator...Wisdom, personified as a woman, is cast as God’s agent of creation in the Old Testament.”

Heiser would also remind us that, “Grammatical gender often has nothing to do with biological gender.” This is helpful background information for when we get to Proverbs 8, but it will also enable us to see the Gospel more clearly from today’s passage that portrays **Wisdom’s Worldwide Warning**.

1. She’s Publicly Calling Out (*Verses 20-21*)
  - a. Loudly in the Open
  - b. Crying Out on the Wall/in the Streets/Public Square/Markets
  - c. Giving a Speech at the City Gate/Council
2. Turn to Know Her (*Verses 22-23*)
  - a. Repent at Her Rebuke
    - i. If You Turn from:
      1. Loving Simple Ways as a Simpleton
      2. Delighting in Mockery as a Scoffer who hates discipline and loves conflicts
      3. Hating Knowledge as a Fool
    - ii. Then Wisdom will:
      1. Pour Out Her Thoughts to You
      2. Make Her Teachings Known to You
3. Consequences are Coming (*Verses 24-33*)
  - a. For Those Who Ignore Her (*Verses 24-32*)
    - i. They also “hate knowledge” and “do not fear the Lord” (*vs. 29*). *There is an immoral and ungodly aspect of “Folly”*.
      1. “They will eat the fruit of their ways...and be filled” (*vss. 30-31*)
        - a. Wisdom Rejects those Who Reject Her (*vss. 24-25, 28*)
        - b. Wisdom will Mock the Mockers (*vss. 26-27*)
    - ii. The Simple are killed by their waywardness (*vs. 32*)
    - iii. The Fools are destroyed by their complacency (*vs. 32*)
  - b. For Those Who Listen (*Verse 33*)
    - i. They will live in safety.
    - ii. Note the “ease” here is the “real-deal” unlike “complacency” which is the “counterfeit ease” of Fools (Ortlund).

Wisdom is not hiding from us. She is out there in the open, loudly urging everyone to repent of folly and turn to her. Her call is available to anyone who will

listen, and she provides a clear warning for those who ignore her call. And, those who ignore Her are guilty of willful ignorance.

What, precisely, is she calling out to the world? What is the content of Wisdom's message for us today; right now? Christ and Him Crucified. Jesus is the full and perfect public proclamation of God's Wisdom. Jesus is the embodied personification of God's wisdom (*1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; cf. Proverbs 8:22*). However, Christ and His Cross is weakness and foolishness to the world, and that's why many do not listen to the call to repent and turn to God's Wisdom fully revealed in Jesus. However, Christ and Him crucified is the power of salvation for those who believe.

We prefer our own simple ways. We hate knowledge, and we scoff at anything that rebukes our thinking in discipline. We inherently want to be autonomous. We want to determine for ourselves that which is good and evil. But that way leads to death and destruction. The unbeliever does not listen to Wisdom and does not repent. This is the Fool who rejects Wisdom's call fully revealed in Christ Crucified; because, they prefer worldly wisdom (which is really foolishness and weakness). The Christian, the Believer, hears and listens to wisdom. IN so doing, the Christian receives the benefits of Wisdom, which include living in safety. As, one commenter stated, "Those who heed wisdom's call find security just as those who trust in the LORD have security." May we take refuge and find our security for living lives acceptable to our Creator and Redeemer God for our good in Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.