

A common device of the Proverbs is contrast, behind which is one primary contrast, accepting versus rejecting the wisdom of God. There are benefits in accepting God's wisdom and danger in rejecting it. That danger is the emphasis of this passage. The writer presents wisdom as a person calling out to people to listen and follow her instruction, especially to those who have rejected or simply ignored it. The later are often called the "simple", fools-in-the-making, because they are becoming fools by ignoring wisdom. Whether fools or just heading there, the consequences are disastrous.

I. *The call of wisdom is public and current (1:20-21).*

1. Wisdom is calling out in the city, in public places, where temptation is evident.
2. This picture is not saying that wisdom is to be found or purchased in the marketplace or from the rulers of the city, since the audience are fools, scoffers and the simple, i.e., those who need wisdom. From 1:1-7 we already know that wisdom begins with fearing God and is found in His Word.
3. Remember furthermore that wisdom includes doing what is right. *Cf.* the parable of the wise and foolish builders (Mt 8:24ff; Lk 6:47-49). The call of wisdom is a call to do what God has said. Our daily circumstances remind us of the need for wisdom and the need to put into practice what we know.
4. The picture of wisdom calling in the city is best understood as her call to come to her and obtain wisdom. She calls through our need for wisdom, through evidences of wisdom (*cf.* 19:25), through practical illustrations of wisdom (*cf.* 6:6), and through the general revelation of God around us. Turning one's back on God is equivalent with rejecting wisdom. See Proverbs 9:10 and Romans 1:18-23.

Wisdom is calling. She is around everyone of us, if we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear. Come and listen. Learn what God wants us to know and do.

II. *The call of wisdom is personal and urgent (1:22-23).*

1. The rhetorical question of verse 22 stresses that it has already been too long. They did not respond (v 23), but rejected wisdom (v 24), ignored it and would not accept it (v 25). Wisdom has given them an opportunity and then did not take it. The consequences are sure, but there is a slight chance that a person might yet turn.
2. Through verse 27 the call of wisdom is very personal, addressed to "you". Note the frequent emphasis of "you" and "your". Each and every person is called to examine his or her own way and to quickly respond and turn to God and His Word.

III. *The call of wisdom carries consequences (1:24-31).*

1. *Rejection earns rejection (24-28).*

To obtain wisdom is an opportunity which may not always exist. Those who refuse wisdom will find that the call of wisdom becomes a lost opportunity.

The rejection of wisdom will allow a person to get themselves into extreme distress. It is like heading downhill with a dead end at the bottom. Rejecting wisdom may seem like a great ride, but will end with a crash. Consider the terms used, calamity overtaking, disaster sweeping, distress and trouble overwhelming. The crash at the bottom will be unexpected and forceful. It will also be painfully revealing. They will desire wisdom, not having the answers, but it will be too late. Wisdom will not answer.

2. *A godless, destructive lifestyle reaps destruction (29-31).*

Cf. Galatians 6:7. The rejection of wisdom implies the choice of some other supposed wisdom, another path than God's way. It also leads to another end.

When a person refuses God, they will end up without God. When a person chooses destructive, evil ways, they will themselves end up being destroyed.

No true believer would consciously turn their back on God, rejecting His wisdom, and pursuing a path of destruction. Never-the-less professing believers can be found on these downhill slopes whether because of deception or succumbing to sin. Current examples include playing with the dangers of sexual immorality (*cf.* 7:25), wrongly dealing with anger (*cf.* 29:11), or ignoring God's wisdom in child-raising (consider 29:11 with regard to the problem of mocking). Failing to start right in any of these areas will lead to disaster later in life. Many will reap the results of rejecting God's wisdom and probably be at a loss as to what to do.

Conclusion to the call of wisdom: contrast of the fool and the wise (1:32-33)

The concluding verses embody the typical contrasts in Proverbs.

The end for the simple and for the fool, for all who hate the knowledge of the Holy and who do not fear the Lord, is death and destruction. The complacency of fools is particularly dangerous, because they imagine that all is well. There is a false sense of security.

The end for the wise, those who listen to (and do) wisdom, will be true security and a freedom from the fear of disaster.

Wisdom is not simply a nice option to enhance one's life. Choosing wisdom has significant consequences: death and destruction versus peace and security. Choosing God's wisdom is an expression of faith in God. Remember that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom.