



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Avoid Woman Folly (Proverbs 9:13-18)

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Folly is very dangerous company!

Challenging class discussion questions:

What temptations do you face in your career?

How do you pass the tests that come in your life?

What secret things do you avoid?

What "hedges" protect you from enticements?

Who holds you accountable on a regular basis?

INTRODUCTION

Traveling down life's highway, you have seen many crossroads, pitfalls, even dead-ends. Looking back, you can see numerous decision points. Some of you have performed fairly well in negotiating those hazards. However, a much greater danger is described in this study. We are warning you about a "woman" called Folly!

Please be reminded that Proverbs was written as an instructional handbook, used for preparing princes for leadership in the kingdom. This lesson will be useful to the child of God who is seeking greater leadership responsibilities in their career, their service and their family. More profoundly, this is about survival and your place in eternity!

Proverbs 9:13-18 The woman Folly is loud; she is undisciplined and without knowledge. She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city, calling out to those who pass by, who go straight on their way. "Let all who are simple come in here!" she says to those who lack judgment. "Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious!" But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of the grave.¹

FOLLY

Webster defines folly as: Conduct contrary to the laws of God or man; scandalous crimes; action which violates moral precepts and dishonors the offender.² The Hebrew root is *ksil*, translated nearly fifty times in the Scriptures for each of our terms "fool" and "folly". The fool commits folly. Nabal was called a fool after his actions put his entire household in great danger. Nabal would not listen to reason since he had rejected the first principle of wisdom, the fear of the Lord (1Samuel 25:17). Moral insolence is a common sign of a fool. ***Fools mock at sin*** (Proverbs 14:9).³

THE BRASH WOMAN FOLLY

Our earlier lesson referred to Woman Wisdom as bold and her call public. Woman Folly also calls out to you but her call is boisterous. There are similarities. Both invite you to an intimate relationship: "Come in with me..." Both invite you to a banquet to share some of their wares. Wisdom's house is on the top of the heights of the city. She represents God's wisdom. Folly has her house by the high places of the city.⁴ She represents idols, the false gods and goddesses that tempt you to seek pleasure, fame, and fortune.

WHO IS BEING INVITED?

Wisdom's call is not secret, but public. She shouts from the heights and sends her ministers out (verse 9:3). Folly's call is deceptive. She sits at her doorway and calls out to those who pass by; those who are making their paths straight (verse 9:14). Folly beckons to those of us that are naïve to the dangers, those who lack understanding of the choices. Enticements are added. Folly suggests that her delights are sweeter due to their risk and danger. Wisdom warns the traveler about Folly. Her previous guests are buried in the back yard! Like the adulterer, Folly leads her visitors to an early death. The Hebrew term *Sheol* is used in many translations; meaning permanent death, hell or Hades⁵

BIBLE STUDIES

LEADERS/LEGISLATORS: WEDNESDAYS 7 -7:50 AM, CAPITOL - ROOM 142 SOUTH
STAFF & GUESTS: WEDNESDAYS 12:05 – 12:55 PM, CAPITOL - ROOM 171 W (SPEAKERS CONFERENCE ROOM)

Kansas

Avoid Woman Folly

Proverbs 1:32-33 For simpletons turn away from me—to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency. But all who listen to me (Wisdom) will live in peace, untroubled by fear of harm.

JOSEPH DINES WITH WISDOM

Genesis 37-50 reports the story of Joseph, son of Jacob whom God named Israel. Joseph is the image of the young man beckoned by both wisdom and folly. Sold into slavery at age seventeen by his jealous brothers, Joseph becomes the servant of an Egyptian named Potiphar. He is one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard. Joseph proves to be hard working, trustworthy, and blessed by God. By his mid-twenties, Joseph has been promoted to manager of all Potiphar's property and serves as his Chief of Staff. Many tests of character were certainly passed during this period. Folly, in the person of his master's wife, tested Joseph by seduction. Spurned, she accused Joseph of immoral conduct. Potiphar imprisoned Joseph, but soon appointed him assistant warden. God intervenes and Pharaoh appoints Joseph Governor over Egypt at the age of thirty, serving until he was nearly 110.

Note the dismal options for Joseph: Without wisdom, he could expect a relatively short life of servitude and anonymous burial in a foreign land. With folly, Joseph would certainly have been executed while in his twenties. The probabilities may not be as dramatic for you and me. However, the options of wisdom or folly are apparent for us.

ATTRIBUTES OF WISDOM

A quick scan of Wisdom's attributes finds the following terms: Blessed, common sense, counsel, diligent, discretion, faultless, hard working, honor, insight, integrity, judgment, justice, knowledge, life,

noble, power, prosperity, prudence, righteous, riches, truth, understanding, wealth, wholesome, wise.

ATTRIBUTES OF FOLLY

The following terms are found or implied in the text describing Folly: Arrogance, crookedness, death, enticement, evil, grave, loud, immoral, perverse, pride, secrecy, slovenliness, stealing, undisciplined, wickedness, without knowledge,

CONCLUSION

The temptations are real. Folly promises short cuts and quick advancement. Enticements include pleasure, an easier road to prosperity, notoriety, and an illusion of security. My Argentina colleague, Luciano Bongarra, reports that, in his lifetime, all but one of his nation's Presidents has been convicted of corruption. Shaun Lewis, our Illinois colleague, winces when referring to the four governors and 1,500 individuals convicted of some form of public corruption since the late 1960's. Most of Folly's visitors fall quickly and are soon in the grave (Sheol). RSVP to dine with Wisdom - keep on the straight road. Difficult? Jesus said: "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

Footnotes:

¹ The Holy Bible, New International Version (International Bible Society). 1978.

² Noah Webster. American Dictionary of the English Language. (Webster) 1828.

³ Derek Kidner. Proverbs: An Introduction & Commentary. (Inter-Varsity Press) 1964. p40-41.

⁴ Tremper Longman III. How to Read Proverbs. (Inter-Varsity Press). 2002.p33.

⁵ John MacArthur. The MacArthur Study Bible (Thomas Nelson Inc). 2006. p877.