

Sermon Guide: Competing Invitations 10/19/25

Text: Proverbs 9:1-18

Big Idea: *The choice to follow wisdom or follow folly is ultimately determined by who you choose to fear.*

Summary of the Sermon - Proverbs 9 concludes the opening section of Proverbs by setting before us two **competing invitations**—one from Wisdom, who offers life through understanding, and one from Folly, who lures with stolen sweetness that leads to death. In the middle of these calls, the chapter **confronts the heart**, showing that how we respond to correction and truth reveals the inner posture of our heart. The turning point comes in verse 10: “**The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.**” In the end, the choice between wisdom and folly is not merely about intellect or lifestyle—it’s about **who you choose to fear**. To walk in wisdom is to honor and submit to the Lord; to follow folly is to live as though He is not to be feared at all.

Discussion Questions

Competing Invitations (vv. 1–6, 13–18)

1. How does Lady Wisdom’s invitation differ from the call of Lady Folly? Keep in mind her tone, the setting, and her purpose.
2. What do Wisdom’s prepared house and feast symbolize about the nature of God’s wisdom and generosity?
3. Why do both Wisdom and Folly call out to “the simple”? What does this reveal about human vulnerability and need?
4. In what ways do the “stolen waters” and “secret bread” of Folly still appeal to us today?
5. How can we discern between the voice of Wisdom and the voice of Folly in our daily lives?

Confronting the Heart (vv. 7–9)

6. Why does Proverbs 9 place this teaching on correction between the two invitations?
7. What distinguishes a wise person from a scoffer when they are corrected?
8. How does our reaction to correction reveal the condition of our heart toward God?
9. In what areas of your life do you find it most difficult to receive correction, and why might that be?

Where Wisdom Begins (vv. 10–12)

10. What does it mean that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”? How does that differ from mere knowledge?
11. How does the “fear of the Lord” reorder our desires, choices, and relationships?