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# Proverbs for the Youth
# 1:8 to 9:18



This prologue forms the context for all the collections to follow **(10:1** to **31:31)**. It is composed of **eleven teachings** from **the father** to **his son**, and **two interludes** by **Wisdom** (Hebrew: *Sophia*), a personification of **the father's** teaching to **simpleminded (1:4),** or inexperienced **youth**. These **teachings** and **interludes** are tributes to **Wisdom**, aiming to motivate **the son** and **the simpleminded** to embrace **Wisdom** in order to escape the easy money offered by **wicked men** and easy sex thrown at **them** by **the seductress**. **The teachings** of **the father** tend to assume **the son's** obedience, and **the interludes** of **Wisdom** tend to presume **simpleminded disobedience**.

Adolescence is the quest for a sense of identity. **The son** and **simpleminded (1:4-5)** stand on the threshold of adulthood. The time has come when they must make a decisive stand for the world view and values of their godly parents and sages. The two conflicting worldviews make their appeal of **Wisdom** and **Foolishness**, **Good** and just pretending to be **Good**, **Life** and **Death. The son** and the **simpleminded** must choose between them. These two competing views are each represented by two voices. On behalf of **Wisdom's** worldview, **the father** addresses **the son** in the home; however, **Foolishness** addresses the **simplemindedness** from the city gate. On behalf of **Foolishness**, **wicked men**

offer fast money and **the seductress** offers easy sex. In a pitched battle, these **combatants**, through **their** speeches more than anything else, compete for the souls of the youth. The stakes are high. It's a matter of life and death. The two world views are also represented by the repeated metaphors of two **paths (1:10-29** and **4:10-19)** and two **houses (2:18-19, 9:1-6** and **13-18)**. **The father's** way leads to **life**, but the way of **evil men** and **carnal women** leads to **death**. **The house** of **Foolishness** is the entrance into **the house of death**; whereas, **the house of Wisdom** leads to **life**. **The son** and **the simpleminded** are already on the road to **life** and **death** respectively. **The son** must persevere on **the path** of **life**, while the **simpleminded** still needs to choose **it**.

A decision needs to be made, one way or the other. **The young man** is most vulnerable to easy money and easy sex, for **his** sexual passions are now the strongest and **his** tendency to be wise in **his** own eyes, and paradoxically to have group approval, has not been toughened by reality. In other words, **he** hasn't had enough life experience. The invitations of **his** peer group and **the seductress** to persuade **the son** and **the simpleminded** to join them share a similar invitation to simply **"Come**!**"** Since no one can force someone to be righteous**, the father** uses all **his** persuasive powers to win **his son** to **Wisdom** and away from **foolishness**.[23]

**Teaching 1 from the father: Hear, and reject the peer group's invitation (1:8-19)**

**The First interlude from Wisdom: Wisdom's Rebuke of the Simpleminded (1:20-33)**

**Teaching 2 from the father: Safeguard against the wicked (2:1-22)**

**Teaching 3 from the father: ADONAI's promises and the son's obligations (3:1-12)**

**Teaching 4 from the father: Blessed are those who find Wisdom (3:13-35)**

**Teaching 5 from the father: Get Wisdom (4:1-9)**

**Teaching 6 from the father: Don't follow the path of the wicked (4:10-19)**

**Teaching 7 from the father: Guard your heart (4:20-27)**

**Teaching 8 from the father: Adultery is Foolish, be faithful to your spouse**

**(5:1-23)**

**Teaching 9 from the father: Three types of Foolish men (6:1-19)**

**Teaching 10 from the father: Warning against adultery (6:20-35)**

**Teaching 11 from the father: Avoid the seductress (7:1-27)**

**The Second interlude from Wisdom: Wisdom's call to the Simpleminded (8:1-36)**

**Epilogue: Decision time for the son and the simpleminded (9:1-18)**