

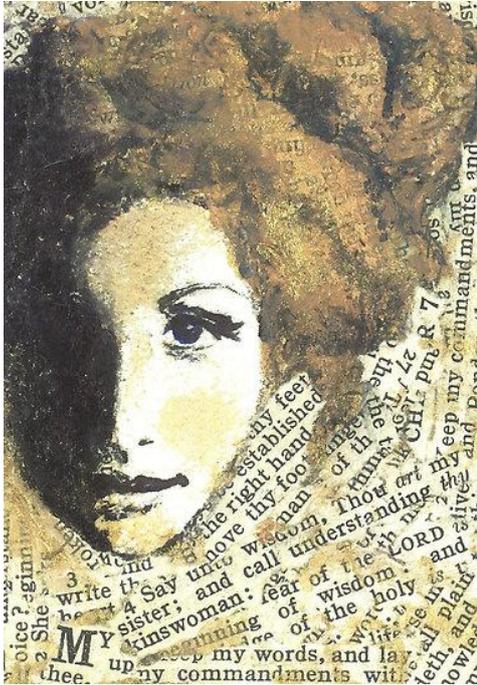
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Those Who Seek Me Will Find Me 8: 12-21

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

Lady Wisdom's lesson is now developed in two separate parts of **ten verses** each; the first pertaining to historic time (**verses 12-21**) and the second to prehistoric time (**verses 22:31**). The first emphasizes **Lady Wisdom's** counsel (**to see link click [Am - Lady Wisdom's Rebuke of the Foolish](#)**), understanding, strength, and practical use; and the second, **her** nobility and authority. Why **choose wisdom instead of silver, knowledge rather than pure gold (8:10)? Verses 12-31** tell us why.

Up to this point Lady Wisdom has been praising the virtues of wisdom; now, personified, she speaks of herself. We begin with a typical Near Eastern introduction **I, Wisdom, live together with good judgment. I have found knowledge, discretion and prudence** (see **1:4** for a detailed discussion of all three words) (**8:12 Hebrew**). After the first-person speaker identifies **herself** as **Lady Wisdom, she** begins by telling us about those traits with which **she** is associated. Indeed, it may be that these traits – **knowledge, discretion and prudence** – are themselves personified in us. In a sense, we may consider these three characteristics **her** best friends. Where you find **Lady Wisdom**, there you will also find these three qualities.¹⁸⁷



Those **who fear ADONAI**, a phrase which we recognize as an alternative description of **those** who are **wise** (see [Ai](#) - **The Fear of ADONAI is the Beginning of Wisdom**), **will hate evil. Therefore, I hate pride and arrogance, evil conduct and perverted speech (8:13 CJB). Whereas in practice, men and women sometimes combine the worship of ADONAI with unethical deeds, Lady Wisdom insists that His service, when correctly apprehended, is impossible without the rejection and loathing of all that can be classified as evil. The wise** are defined not only by **their** positive qualities, but also by those characteristics that do not typify **them**. They are not **evil**; indeed, they **hate evil**. Some are bothered by the word **hate** here. Are believers to **hate**? Yes, we are to **hate evil**. But they object, well, **ADONAI** doesn't **hate** does **He**? Yes, indeed **He** does (see [Bf](#) - **What God Hates**). We know there is darkness because of the light, and we know there is righteousness because of **evil**. So once again, we note the ethical quality of **Lady Wisdom**. This verse also distances **the wise** from pride and arrogance as well as from the foolish **young men** to whom **she** is addressing.¹⁸⁸

Wisdom's competence can be celebrated because it flows from **the fear of ADONAI**. It includes precisely what **the young men** needed to serve **their** nation and countrymen well. **I have insight, common sense and sound judgment** to make decisions and shape plans **are mine**. All of these characteristics allow such

significant accomplishment, such effective disposal of problems, such powerful development of courses of action in politics and economics or justice that they can be described by the word **power**.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, **she** can say: **I have the power** to give **it** to those in doubt **(8:14 NIV)**. **Wisdom** makes a person courageous like a brave soldier. **By Me kings reign, and rulers make just mitzvot**, as the next clause implies, not as a despot, without regard of right and wrong **(8:15 CJB)**. **Rulers lead with My help, and nobles make righteous judgments (8:16 NLT)**.

The thrust of **verses 14-16** is that **Lady Wisdom** will help those who wield **power** to exercise it in an appropriate and beneficial way in their community. This means that **wisdom** is extremely practical in leadership positions. The classic example of this is when **Solomon** asked for **wisdom** to govern **God's people** and discern between **good** and **evil** in doing so (see the commentary on **the Life of Solomon As - Solomon's Wish**). Immediately after this was given, **he** was tested in a legal dispute between **two prostitutes** over who was the true mother of the baby (see **the Life of Solomon At - A Wise Ruling**). **Solomon** used **his wisdom** by devising a shrewd test - ordering that **the baby be cut in half** to reveal **the one woman** who had true maternal instincts, with the result that **all Isra'el** understood that **the wisdom** of **ADONAI** was with **Solomon** to **administer justice (First Kings 3:28)**.¹⁹⁰

Now we are informed that **Lady Wisdom** is not hard to **find**, not hard to attain. But one must pursue **her**. **I love all those who love me; and those who seek me will find me (8:17 CJB)**. As **Yeshua** instructs us: **Ask and it will be given to you; seek and your will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened (Matthew 7:7-8)**. **She loves** those who **love her** and allows those who **search** for **her** to **find her**. The same theme is found in **Chapter 2**, and there we learn of the paradox that those who search and find **Lady Wisdom** do so because of **the gift of God**. And we find a striking parallel in the B'rit Chadashah where Rabbi Sha'ul tells us that **it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and you can't take credit for this. - it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8)**.

As motivation for the pursuit, again, **Lady Wisdom** reminds us of the rewards that follow a relationship with **her**: **enduring wealth and justice (8:18 NLT)**. Nevertheless, these verses in **Proverbs** are sometimes used by people who believe in the "prosperity gospel," but that is to misuse them. First, there is no *promise* of

abundant **wealth**, any more than there was a *promise* of **long life** and **peace** in **3:2**. To claim a **proverb** as a promise is to misunderstand the type of literature it is. A **proverb** describes only a part, not the whole, of life, and so is not always applicable in a given situation or at a given time. Therefore, **Yeshua**, despite honoring **the Father** with **His** whole life, had neither a **long life (3:2)**, nor **barns overflowing with plenty (3:10)**. Second, the material prosperity is not limited with the size of the monetary gift, but with character (honoring **the Lord**). Such a character trait would involve not wanting to give **wealth** an inordinate place in one's desires, so that truly honoring **ADONAI** would entail keeping your life free from **the love of money** because **it is the root of all kinds of evil (First Timothy 6:10)**. The prosperity gospel misses the important emphasis in **Proverbs** on the theme of contentment by discovering your sweet spot in life (see [Du - The Prayer of Agur](#)).¹⁹¹

One key purpose of **Chapters 1-9** within the book is that **the young foolish men** would strive to have **their** character shaped **Lady Wisdom** as **they** reject the path of foolishness. This emphasis on pursuing **Lady Wisdom** makes sense of **verses 18-19**, which outline financial incentives for seeking **Lady Wisdom**. For the second time in this chapter (see **8:10-12**), **wisdom**, or better here, the consequence of being **wise; my fruit (3:18), is better than gold, even the purest gold, my wages better than sterling silver (8:19 Hebrew). The rich** should be shaped by **wisdom**, meaning that **they** should be committed to **the righteous** use of **their wealth** and **power**. The patriarchs, for example, were wealthy men. **I walk steadily or continuously in righteousness, in paths of justice (8:20 NLT). Those who love me inherit wealth. I will fill their treasuries (8:21 NLT)**. Like many statements in **Proverbs**, this one is a generalization to which expectations should be noted. **Lady Wisdom** does not offer the promise of dishonest gain, or **wealth** at the expense of those in need, but of **wealth** rightly gained and to be used in agreement with **her** nature and values.¹⁹²