WISDOM’S CALL

PROVERBS 8:1-36
Wisdom’s Call

Text:

Proverbs 8:1-36,

1. Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?
2. At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand;
3. beside the gate leading into the city, at the entrance, she cries aloud:
4. “To you, O people, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind.
5. You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, set your hearts on it.
6. Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right.
7. My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness.
8. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse.
9. To the discerning all of them are right; they are upright to those who have found knowledge.
10. Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold,
11. for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.
13. To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.
14. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power.
15. By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just;
16. by me princes govern, and nobles—all who rule on earth.
17. I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me.
18. With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.
19. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver.
20. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice,
21. bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full.
22. “The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old;
23. I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.
24. When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water;
25. before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth,
26. before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth.
27. I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
28. when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
29. when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
30. Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence,
31. rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.
32. “Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways.
33. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it.
34. Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.
35. For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD.
36. But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death.” (NIV)

Introduction:

I. Wisdom is the prime topic in the following passages in Proverbs:

A. Proverbs 1:20-33, Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square; on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech: “How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? Repent at my rebuke! Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings. But since you refuse to listen when I call and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand, since you disregard all my advice and do not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you; I will mock when calamity overtakes you — when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. “Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me, since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD. Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm.” (NIV)

B. Proverbs 8:1-36

C. Proverbs 9:1-6, Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table. She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city, “Let all who are
simple come to my house!” To those who have no sense she says, “Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight.” (NIV)

II. Wisdom and folly contrasted:

A. Proverbs 7 speaks of the destructive nature of folly as presented under the figures of an immoral woman and a simple young man who lacked understanding.

B. Proverbs 8 presents wisdom as totally good, the producer of blessings and life.

C. In chapter 7 an impure, lascivious woman entices a young man to follow her in the paths of immorality and death while chapter 8 presents a beautiful lady – Wisdom – who urges all to follow her in the paths of nobility, integrity, fidelity, and life. (Smith)

D. Choose which one you will follow because you can’t follow both!

1. I Kings 18:21, Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

E. Wisdom is presented as the leading principle in the ways of God. (Coffman)

F. Wisdom:

1. Judges correctly because it has knowledge of both Divine and human things. (Clarke)
2. Is an attribute of God evidenced in this chapter in regard to creation. (Clarke)

III. Proverbs 8:1-36 regarding Wisdom is the 14th admonitory discourse found in this book which discourse can be divided, outlined as follows:

A. Introduction, verses 1-3,…

B. Wisdom calls on all to listen and give reasons for trusting in her, verses 4-11,…

C. Wisdom displays her excellence, verses 12-21,…

D. Wisdom tells of her origin and actions, verses 22-31,…

E. Wisdom again urges all to hear her instructions, verses 32-36,…

Commentary:

Wisdom’s Call

Proverbs 8:1, Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? (NIV)

I. Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?

A. Proverbs 1:20, Out in the open wisdom calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square; (NIV)

B. Wisdom is here personified and extolled by the parents and, in Proverbs 8:1-36, by wisdom (personified) itself. (Hamilton)

1. Personification is a frequently used biblical literary device. (See Hamilton.)
a. Psalm 98:8, Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; (NIV)

b. Isaiah 55:12, You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. (NIV)

C. Wisdom calls out to all mankind everywhere to follow her ways for their good in all areas of their lives.

1. Asking these questions here is a way of affirming the answers. (The Pulpit Commentary)

Proverbs 8: 2, At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; (NIV)

I. On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand;

A. Wisdom is readily available everywhere.

1. Those who seek Wisdom will find it. (Hamilton)

   a. Proverbs 8:17, 35, I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD. (NIV)

   b. Proverbs 1:21, on top of the wall she cries out, at the city gate she makes her speech: (NIV)

2. Deuteronomy 30:11-14, Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to
us so we may obey it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. (NIV)

3. Wisdom calls out in the streets, public squares, crossroads, and city gates. (Hamilton)

B. Wisdom acts persistently in conspicuous sites for the purpose of attracting the largest number of listeners. (Smith)

1. The immoral woman stalked her prey on dark street corners while lady Wisdom placed herself on the heights at major crossroads in broad daylight. (See Smith)

2. What a contrast!

Proverbs 8:3, beside the gate leading into the city, at the entrance, she cries aloud: (NIV)

I. Beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrance, she cries aloud:

A. In a similar way, Christ and the apostles preached in the temple, in synagogues, on the shore of the lake, in private homes, along the thoroughfares, to Jews and Gentiles, in jail, in the open fields, by the river side, everywhere! (See Clarke)

1. Many will never enter the church buildings.

2. The gospel must be preached to people where they are.

3. Wisdom placed herself where she was sure to get an audience.
a. Christians should follow Wisdom

b. 2 Peter 3:9, The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (NIV)

4. Wisdom placed herself where people would see her coming and going.

5. She appeals to all, the small and the great.

Proverbs 8:4, “To you, O people, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind. (NIV)

I. “To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind.

   A. Wisdom appeals to people of all classes, nationality, races, “all mankind.”

   B. Wisdom demands to be heard!

      1. She goes everywhere asking to be heard.

      2. Her message is for “all the descendants of Adam.” (Clarke)

   C. Even those who have some wisdom need more!

Proverbs 8:5, You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, set your hearts on it. (NIV)

I. You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain understanding.
A. The word *simple* refers, not to those with learning disabilities, but to sinners, the deceived and deluded. (Coffman, Clarke).

B. The word *foolish* is found 49 times in Proverbs, 18 times in Ecclesiastes, and 3 times elsewhere referencing immorality and lack of integrity, transgressions. (Coffman)

C. The Pulpit Commentary states that the word *simple* applies to those who are easily persuaded, influenced by either good or evil.

1. The *foolish* most certainly need understanding.

Proverbs 8:6, *Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say; I open my lips to speak what is right.* (NIV)

I. Listen, for I have worthy things (plain, evident truths) to say; I open my lips to speak what is right.

A. Wisdom’s message consists of what is worthy, right, true, just, and faultless, better than all other comparable things.

1. Proverbs 22:20-21, *Have I not written thirty sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge, teaching you to be honest and to speak the truth, so that you bring back truthful reports to those you serve?* (NIV)

2. Proverbs 23: 15-16, *My son, if your heart is wise, then my heart will be glad indeed; my inmost being will rejoice when your lips speak what is right.* (NIV)

B. Wisdom speaks only what is right, things which “correct false notion, and set straight crooked ways.” (Clarke)
Proverbs 8:7, My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips detest wickedness. (NIV)

I. My mouth speaks (utters) what is true, for my lips detest wickedness.
   
   A. Wisdom speaks the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
   
   B. Wisdom hates wickedness and does not speak anything which is in any way other than true, pure, and honest.

Proverbs 8:8, All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. (NIV)

I. All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse.

   A. Smith wrote that those who “find knowledge” will recognize that Wisdom’s words are right.
   
   B. Nothing Wisdom says is distorted and what is said is spoken respectfully.

   1. What Wisdom says is without exception, true, and just.

Proverbs 8:9, To the discerning all of them are right; they are upright to those who have found knowledge. (NIV)

I. To the discerning all of them are right; they are upright to those who have knowledge

   A. “When one opens his heart to receive divine instruction, he is rewarded by having his understanding enlightened,” Smith wrote.
B. Coffman quoted the International Critical Commentary as saying, “The world is divided into two classes, the wise and the foolish, and it depends on the man’s will to which of these he shall belong.”

C. Clarke noted that Wisdom’s speech is straightforward.

D. Those of discernment and knowledge fully realize that all Wisdom says is right, beneficial.

1. I Corinthians 2:14, The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. (NIV)

2. Psalm 25:14, The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them. (NIV)

Proverbs 8:10, Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, (NIV)

I. Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold.

A. Wisdom’s instruction and knowledge are better than silver and gold.

1. Proverbs 3:13-15, Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. (NIV)

B. Among other good things, Wisdom’s instruction and knowledge may well lead to lasting treasures, earthly and spiritual.
1. **Proverbs 2:10**, For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. (NIV)

**Proverbs 8:11**, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. (NIV)

I. For wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

   A. Wisdom is of more value than silver, gold, rubies, or anything else people may compare with it. (See Smith.)

   1. **Proverbs 3:14-15**, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. (NIV)

   **Note:** “Wisdom personified now speaks for herself.” (Smith)

**Proverbs 8:12**, “I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. (NIV)

I. I, Wisdom, dwell together with prudence (reliability);

   A. Wisdom dwells with prudence, not with an immoral woman picked up on a dark street corner. (See Chapter 7)

   1. What a contrast!

   B. Wisdom and prudence are well able to deal with life’s problems successfully.
1. Bland wrote, “Wisdom offers prudence, knowledge, discretion, counsel, sound judgment, understanding, and power.

2. Clarke wrote that prudence is the practical application of wisdom to daily life by which the best results are achieved by the most appropriate means.

II. I possess knowledge and discretion.

A. Knowledge (information) allows a person to act with discretion in the various situations faced in life.

B. The Septuagint via The Pulpit Commentary reads, “I (Wisdom) called upon understanding, it is I who inspires all good and righteous thought.”

Proverbs 8:13, To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. (NIV)

I. To fear the Lord is to hate evil;…

A. Wisdom fears the Lord and hates evil.

1. Smith wrote, “There can be no fellowship between light and darkness; he who serves the Lord must renounce the works of the devil.” (See the Pulpit Commentary.)

B. It is impossible to love God and to love evil at the same time as these qualities are diametrically opposite.

1. The right way is to love God and to hate evil.

2. The wise person does exactly this: loves, fears, respects good, and hates evil.
II. I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech.

A. Wisdom hates pride and arrogance and demonstrates humility.

1. Remember that the Lord hates “haughty eyes” (Proverbs 6:16-17, There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,) (NIV)

2. Hating evil involves hating all the components of evil such as pride, arrogance, evil behavior, all kinds of perverse speech which includes all sins of the tongue.

B. Wisdom hates evil behavior, the evil way; that is, any departure from God’s right way of living. (Smith)

C. Wisdom hates sins of attitude, conduct, and speech… sins of all kinds!

1. Proverbs 2:12-15, Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men, from men whose words are perverse, who have left the straight paths to walk in dark ways, who delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil, whose paths are crooked and who are devious in their ways. (NIV)

2. Proverbs 10:31-32, From the mouth of the righteous comes the fruit of wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be silenced. The lips of the righteous know what finds favor, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse. (NIV)

Proverbs 8:14, Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power. (NIV)
I. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power.

   A. Wisdom provides counsel, “Advice to the perplexed and confused,” (Smith) direction as to how to act in all circumstances and on all occasions. (Clarke)

   B. Wisdom provides sound judgment which is altogether good and beneficial to the individual, which counsel guides people to and in the way of righteousness.

   C. Wisdom is understanding.

      1. The very essence of wisdom is understanding just as God is love. (The Pulpit Commentary)

   D. Wisdom, knowledge possesses power; strength to achieve success in life.

      1. Wisdom instructs those who would learn from her in these topics.

      2. Ecclesiastes 7:19, Wisdom makes one wise person more powerful than ten rulers in a city. (NIV)

   E. In these qualities our Lord Jesus excels.

      1. Isaiah 9:6-7, For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and
righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. (NIV)

Proverbs 8:15, By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; (NIV)

I. By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just;…

A. I Kings 3:9, So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?” (NIV)

B. Isaiah 11:1-5, A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. (NIV)

C. Isaiah 32:1, See, a king will reign in righteousness and rulers will rule with justice. (NIV)

D. Rulers of all nations “who display political virtues and rule in righteousness demonstrate wisdom,” Bland wrote.

1. “Wisdom is that quality which brings order to a society,” Bland stated.
2. Wisdom is necessary for the success of all mankind from the least to the great. (See Coffman.)

3. Just laws and their righteous administration flow from Wisdom. (See Clarke.)

Proverbs 8:16, by me princes govern, and nobles—all who rule on earth. (NIV)

I. by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth.

   A. Kings, princes, consuls, nobles, and chiefs of the people, judges and civil magistrates, all who rule well, are indebted to Wisdom for their position and their righteous success. (See Clarke.)

   B. Without some degree of wisdom princes, kings, nobles, and judges could not discharge their duties.

Proverbs 8:17, I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. (NIV)

I. I love those who love me,…

   A. Those who love Wisdom will do as she says and Wisdom will love and bless those who follow her lead.

   1. John 14:21, Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” (NIV)

   2. “Love attracts love.” (The Pulpit Commentary)

II. and those who seek me (earnestly, early) find me.
A. Matthew 7:7-8, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you 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. (NIV)

B. The ones in view here do not seek Wisdom just once in a while half heartedly, but continually, consistently and whole heartedly beginning in youth, and continuing through middle age and into maturity without fail.

1. More benefit comes to those who begin to search for Wisdom in their youth as more years are available in which to grow in wisdom and to enjoy its dividends.

Proverbs 8:18, With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. (NIV)

I. With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity.

   A. Those who love wisdom and walk in her ways are rewarded with riches (enduring wealth and prosperity) and honor.

      1. Proverbs 3:16, Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. (NIV)

   B. Eternal wealth does not necessarily always include stocks and bonds, houses, land, etc.

   C. Enduring Wealth, a seeming inconsistence, references long accumulated riches. (The Pulpit Committee)

Proverbs 8:19. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. (NIV)
I. My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield (my profit, produce) surpasses choice silver.

   A. The good, bountiful life is attainable by all who walk in the paths of wisdom.

   B. Wisdom’s fruit is better than gold and silver.

   1. **Proverbs 3:14**, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. (NIV)

   2. “Fine gold” or pure gold refers to gold from which all impurities, alloys and mixture have been removed. (See Smith.)

   C. Wisdom is here pictured as a tree which yields wonderful fruit for the good of mankind.

   1. **Proverbs 3:18**, She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed. (NIV)

**Proverbs 8:20.** I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, (NIV)

I. I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice;…

   A. Wisdom bestows righteousness, justice, and wealth on those who love her.

   1. Wisdom doesn’t just teach wisdom, she lives it.

   2. **Proverbs 4:27**, Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil. (NIV)
3. Psalm 119:33, Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end. (NIV)

4. Psalm 143:8, Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life. (NIV)

B. Wealth without righteousness is empty like wondrous deeds without love.

1. I Corinthians 13:1-3, If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. (NIV)

C. Wisdom does not depart from the way of righteousness and justice.

1. Those who would receive wisdom’s blessings must not depart from the paths of righteousness and justice!

2. Proverbs 4:27, Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil. (NIV)

Proverbs 8:21, bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me and making their treasuries full. (NIV)

I. bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries full.
A. The full blessings of wealth come only to those who have achieved it by righteous means.

B. Coffman wrote, “Verses 17-21 teach man how to make life a success in a wealthy sense. However, it is in the application of the principles of the true Wisdom in the moral and spiritual phases of one’s own life that by far the greatest rewards of Wisdom are to be received.”

1. Matthew 6:19-21, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NIV)

2. Luke 12:33-34, Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NIV)

3. I Peter 1:3-5, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (NIV)

Proverbs 8:22, “The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; (NIV)
I. The Lord brought me forth the first of his works, before deeds of old;…

A. Hamilton wrote, “Wisdom was created [Hebrew qanah, a different word from Genesis 1’s bana] by God, before anything else, and then Wisdom was present in the creation of the world.”

B. Wisdom has already made high claim for herself in this chapter but now she makes the greatest claim of all; viz., wisdom was present before the creation of the heavens and earth and with her help God made all things. (See Smith)

C. Wisdom was created by the Lord God and was with God at the creation; therefore, her course should be heeded. (Bland)

1. Proverbs 3:19-20, By wisdom the LORD laid the earth’s foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; by his knowledge the watery depths were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew. (NIV)

2. Coffman observed that God possessed Wisdom from eternity.

D. “Early Christians used verse 22 to argue that Wisdom was found in Jesus,” Bland wrote.

1. Related scriptures:

a. John 1:1-5, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the
darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (NIV)

b. Colossians 1:15-18, The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. (NIV)

c. I Corinthians 8:6, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. (NIV)

d. Hebrews 1:3, The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. (NIV)

e. Revelation 3:14, “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. (NIV)

f. I Corinthians 1:24, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (NIV)
g. Luke 11:49, Because of this, God in his wisdom said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.’ (NIV)

2. “Wisdom has its full and complete meaning in Christ,” Coffman stated.

E. The Arian heresy was based to a great extent on a mistranslation of this verse. (See Coffman)

1. Arianism was long ago rejected as a false doctrine.

2. The Arian heresy held that the Father alone is God and that the Son of God was a created being, not divine and not eternal. (See Schaff-Herzog)

F. Clarke well wrote that wisdom was not created, but was an inherent eternal characteristic of God’s divine nature, and that Proverbs 8 does not speak of Jesus the Messiah, the eternal Son of God.

Proverbs 8:23, I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. (NIV)

I. I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.

A. Smith wrote, “What is affirmed here is that wisdom is superior to all earthly things and existed before the earth existed.”

B. Also, God is eternal and he has forever been absolutely wise.

Proverbs 8:24, When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; (NIV)
I. When there were no oceans, I was given birth, when there were no springs abounding with water;…

A. Wisdom is older than the oceans, springs, mountains, hills, earth, field dust, heavens, horizons of the ocean, clouds, fountains of the deep, set in the boundaries of the oceans, and the earth’s foundations.

Proverbs 8:25, before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, (NIV)

I. before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth,…

A. This is figurative expression; that is, “given birth.”

B. This verse says that wisdom existed before the mountains and hills and before creation.

Proverbs 8:26, before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth. (NIV)

I. before he made the earth or its fields or any of the dust of the world.

A. Again, Wisdom pre-dated the earth, fields, and even dust.

B. The contrast here is between cultivated/occupied land and uncultivated/waste land, The Pulpit Commentary advises, while dust refers to dry areas contrasted with wetlands.

Proverbs 8:27, I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, (NIV)

I. I was there when he set the heavens in place,…
A. Wisdom, as an attribute of God, was present when the stars, moon, and planets were created.

II. When he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,…

A. Clarke wrote that this statement references gravity.

B. References:

1. Job 22:14, Thick clouds veil him, so he does not see us as he goes about in the vaulted heavens.’ (NIV)

2. Isaiah 40:22, He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. (NIV)

Proverbs 8:28, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, (NIV)

I. When he established the clouds above and…

A. Clarke wrote that the whole atmosphere was referenced here.

B. References:

1. Genesis 1:7, So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. (NIV)

2. Job 26:8, He wraps up the waters in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst under their weight. (NIV)
II. fixed securely the fountains of the deep,…(the Septuagint adds: “…the fountains of the earth beneath the heavens.”)

A. This has in view the oceans’ deep sources of water which fill the seas.

1. Genesis 7:11, In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. (NIV)

2. Job 38:16, “Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? (NIV)

Proverbs 8:29. when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. (NIV)

I. when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command,…

A. God set the oceans within boundaries limiting them to confinement within their shores even though the middle is higher than its edges.

1. Job 38:8, “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, (NIV)

II. and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.

A. These “foundations” refer to the irreversible laws by which the earth is governed and the principles on which it was constructed. (Clarke)
1. Job 38:4, “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. (NIV)

Proverbs 8:30, Then I was constantly at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, (NIV)

I. Then I was the craftsman (workman) at his side.

A. In the creation of all the heaven and earth and related wonders mentioned in verses 22-29, Wisdom served as God’s assistant, craftsman.

B. Bland noted that “The basic idea is that God nurtured and cared for wisdom during the act of creation.”

II. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence.

A. “As Wisdom witnessed the progressive formation of the universe, she was filled with delight,” Smith wrote.

1. Genesis 1:4, God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. (NIV)

2. Psalm 104:31, May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works— (NIV)

B. Clarke stated Wisdom’s picture here is that of a playful child rejoicing in the presence and activities of a beloved parent.

C. God also delighted in Wisdom as a father delights in his child.

Proverbs 8:31, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind. (NIV)
I. rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.

   A. Wisdom rejoiced in all God had done and especially in God’s creation of mankind, the peak of all wonderful handiwork.

The Epilogue

Proverbs 8:32, “Now then, my children, listen to me; blessed are those who keep my ways. (NIV)

I. Now then, my son, listen to me;…

   A. Since Wisdom delights in mankind, she wants us to be happy.

       1. Wisdom encourages mankind to heed her counsel that humans may realize their potential.

II. Blessed are those who keep my ways.

   A. Those who walk in Wisdom’s way will be blessed.

   B. Those who walk in any other way will suffer and not be blessed.

Proverbs 8:33, Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it. (NIV)

I. Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not ignore it.

   A. Wisdom’s instructions are essential to your well being.

       1. Proverbs 3:4, Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. (NIV)

       2. Do not ignore wisdom’s instruction! It is vitally important, essential if you would be wise.
B. Ignoring Wisdom will lead to your destruction.

Proverbs 8:34, Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. (NIV)

I. Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway.

A. Those blessed by wisdom are eager to listen to her and who hear every day her words of instruction.

B. Wisdom does not have to search for these people, but those seeking wisdom’s blessings are at her doors waiting to hear what she has to say.

C. Clarke wrote that Wisdom is here presented as a school and the prudent are at the school door anxious to hear what she has to teach.

1. These are eager to hear everything they can learn from Wisdom.

Proverbs 8:35, For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD. (NIV)

I. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord.

A. Wisdom gives life, serves as a tree of life.

1. Proverbs 3:16, 18, 22, Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed. They will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. (NIV)
B. Those with Wisdom receive the Lord’s favor, blessings.

Proverbs 8:36, But those who fail to find me harm themselves; all who hate me love death.” (NIV)

I. But whoever fails to find me harms himself;…

   A. In the final analysis, it is the person by his choices who harms himself. (Clarke)

      I. If we resist the devil, he will flee from us, Clarke reminds us.

II. all who hate me love death.”

   A. “…those who hate Wisdom love, i.e., show preference for death because the wages of sin is death.” Smith wrote.

   B. Bland concluded, “Wisdom is described not simply as an intellectual component, but as an attitude, a desire.”

      1. “Wisdom’s function is to generate a passion for doing good and for building a wall of protection from temptation.”

   C. To hate Wisdom is to love sin which leads to death!

      1. Job 12:10, In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. (NIV)

Conclusion:

I. Proverbs 8 addresses the subject of wisdom, which is closely aligned with understanding, prudence, knowledge, discernment, instruction, discretion, counsel, sound judgment, power, riches, honor, enduring wealth, prosperity, and justice.
II. Wisdom calls out to all people everywhere to heed her words of truth and righteousness to:

   A. Fear the Lord,…

   B. Hate evil,…

   C. Hate pride and arrogance,…

   D. Hate evil behavior,…

   E. Hate perverse speech,…

III. Wisdom:

   A. enables government officials to rule well,…

   B. is readily available to all who seek her,…

   C. leads to enduring wealth and prosperity, but is better than gold and silver,…

   D. leads to righteousness and justice,…

   E. leads to life.

   F. leads to divine favor.

IV. Wisdom:

   A. is an eternal characteristic of God, deity.

   B. Christ Jesus, being the exact image of the Father, is the personification of the fullness of God’s wisdom!
V. Wisdom is the first of God’s creative works, older than all physical creation, and served as craftsman during the formation of the heavens and earth.

VI. Listen to wisdom and live; hate wisdom and die.
Questions

On

Proverbs 8:1-36

(Questions based on NIV text.)

1. In what three passages in the book of Proverbs is Wisdom the primary topic?

2. What contrasts are presented in Proverbs 7 and 8?

3. Based on what is said in Proverbs 8, what are the benefits of Wisdom?

4. Based on what is said in Proverbs 8, what are the penalties for failing to follow the ways of Wisdom?
5. How can Proverbs 8 be outlined? __________________________________________

6. What is meant by *personification*? How is it used in Proverbs 8? ___

7. From where does Wisdom call out to be heard? What is the significance of this? ____________________________

8. From where did the immoral woman of Proverbs 7 call out? What is the significance of this? ____________________________
9. In what ways did Christ and the apostles follow Wisdom’s example? (see Verse 3.) ______________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

10. What lesson is there in this for us? _________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

11. Who are the simple and foolish of verse 5? __________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

12. What does Wisdom speak? _________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

13. What kinds of things does Wisdom not speak? _________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
14. What types of people discern that Wisdom’s words are true? What types of people don’t realize Wisdom’s words are right?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

15. Why is Wisdom’s instruction better than silver and gold?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

16. ___________ is the ___________ ___________ of ___________ to the best ___________ are ___________ by the ___________ ___________.

17. To ___________ the ___________ is to ___________ ___________. There can be no ___________ between ___________ and ___________; he who ___________ the ___________ must ___________ the ___________ of the devil. It is impossible to ___________ ___________ and to ___________ ___________ at the same time.

18. What does Wisdom hate?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

19. What does Wisdom love?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
20. What does Wisdom have and provide? _______________________

21. ________ enables ________ and ________ to make ________ that are ________.

22. Whom does Wisdom love? ________________________________

23. How can wisdom be found? ________________________________

24. How can wealth be called *enduring* when it is such an uncertain thing? ________________________________
25. What is *fine* gold? Isn’t all gold fine?

26. Wisdom walks in the ________ of ________, along the ________ of ________, and bestows ________ on those who love ________ and makes them ________ ________.

27. What was the Arian heresy?

28. On what scripture misinterpretation was this heresy based?

29. What characteristics are shared by both wisdom and Jesus Christ?
30. When did Wisdom begin? When will it end? When did Jesus Christ begin? When will he end? ____________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

31. Define “fountains of the deep” and “foundations of the earth.” ____
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

32. In what way(s) was wisdom the *craftsman* of the universe by the side of God in creation? ________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

33. What advice does Wisdom give his son? …what does he say to his son? ______________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

34. Who is Wisdom’s *son*? (see verses 32-36.) ___________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
35. Proverbs 8 addresses the subject of wisdom which is closely aligned with __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________, __________.

36. Wisdom calls out to all people everywhere to heed her words of truth and righteousness to: ______________________________________

37. Wisdom: _______________________________________________

38. __________ to __________ and __________; ____________ and __________.

39. Can anyone, everyone get wisdom? Explain your answer. __________

__________________________________________________________
40. How does a person get wisdom?