

Wisdom Shows The Way of Happiness
International Bible Lesson
Proverbs 8:22-35
Sunday, March 4, 2012
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“Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways” (Proverbs 8:32—KJV).

“Now, young people, listen to me. Do as I say, and you will be happy” (Proverbs 8:32—GNB).

“And now, my children, listen to me: happy are those who keep my ways” (Proverbs 8:32—NRSV).

In Proverbs, chapter 8, the writer personified wisdom by presenting the concept of wisdom as a real person. He never intended to imply that wisdom was a real woman when he asked, “Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice?” (Proverbs 8:1). He did not want people to think that God created wisdom as a person before God created anything else when he wrote, “The LORD created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago” (Proverbs 8:22). Rather, with vivid imagery, he wanted everyone to know that God created all things only after wise planning. No matter how things may appear now, ever since people began to sin, God created everything with wisdom and still acts wisely in all He does.

The Proverbs also teach that when people listen to wisdom and act wisely they will be happy. When people choose to act wisely, they can be happy knowing that they have acted rightly and have done their best no matter what the consequences. True wisdom will not come “through

philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:8). True wisdom will come through a careful and prayerful study of the Bible. When the Proverbs state, “Happy is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors,” they emphasize the importance of reading the Bible daily (Proverbs 8:34). However, Bible study alone and apart from keeping the ways of wisdom will not lead to happiness or finding life and obtaining favor from the LORD (Proverbs 8:35).

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Thinking Further

1. Why can the Bible's use of personification be confusing sometimes for some people?

2. Why is it important for the Bible (and for believers) to teach people that God acts with wisdom and always acts wisely?

3. Why do we need the teachings of the Bible in addition to what we can learn about God from our observing the world and reasoning from what we observe?

4. Give some possible reasons why God delights in the human race.

5. Read Proverbs 8:32-35 again. Now, read Proverbs 8:36 (though it was not included in our Bible lesson for today). Why do you think God inspired the writer of this chapter to include verse 36?

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