

WHO'S THAT LADY? (PART 1)
PROVERBS 8:1-21

By Pastor John Carlini, D. Mn

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Let me again remind us of the context of these verses. In the first 9 chapters of Proverbs, King Solomon has been trying to describe for us the nature of wisdom. Wisdom is defined as taking God's laws, making them practical, and putting them into everyday life situations. For example, the Law says, "You will not steal." Wisdom says, "If your neighbor catches you trying to steal one of his cows, he will beat your brains out so don't even think about it."

Further, we said that the Devil takes the things of this world and distorts them. He tries to make us believe that God's laws are meant to take all the fun away and so the teacher in these last couple of chapters introduced us to Lady Seduction. He used the specific situation of how we are tempted to fall into sexual immorality however it is equally applicable to all situations in which we are tempted to disobey God's laws.

The teacher made it quite clear that Lady Seduction's goal is to kill us spiritually and physically, and to steal away the joy of our relationship with God. Those of you who are Bible students recognize that this is a description of the Devil himself Jesus said that Satan comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

However, Jesus also said that He came to give us a full and abundant life, filled with joy so this week, we will be introduced fully to Lady Wisdom. Chapter 8 personifies wisdom as a beautiful, elegant woman. I am going to deal with this chapter in two sessions because it is too packed to deal with in one meeting. The thing about wisdom is that it helps us assign proper value to things. When we are seduced by the world, our value system is thrown off.

Let me give you an example. Some people are so compulsive, aren't they? There was a family whose father was terminally ill. He was expected to die at any moment so his family

gathered around him. The eldest son said, “Daddy, is there anything you want? Is there anything we can do for you?”

The old man whispered, “Yes, I have one last wish. I smell something familiar and delicious. It smells like your mother’s apple strudel. Please bring me a piece of that strudel there is none better.” The son was gone for quite a while and returned empty handed. The dying father asked, “What took you so long and why no apple strudel?” The son looked at his father with a sad face and said, “Daddy, you know how Mama is, always so practical, and so strict. She says the strudel is for after the funeral.”

Now as stupid and out of whack as that sounds, when we get involved with Lady Seduction, she will make a greater fool out of us than that. Let us see what Lady Wisdom has to offer. Please don’t miss the contrast that the teacher has set before us. Lady Seduction only leads to broken lives, misery, and death. All you need to do is talk to people who have ruined their lives through sexual immorality, addictions of any kind, and broken relationships. On the other hand, the main idea of this morning’s text is **FALLING IN LOVE WITH LADY WISDOM LEADS TO A HAPPY AND REWARDING LIFE**. Chasing after the things of this world -- power, money, sex, lust and adventures of all sorts -- will drain us of time, energy, and money. Chasing after the things of this world promise excitement and fulfillment, but they leave us broke, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and materially.

I. **SHE IS CLASSY (Vs. 1-5)**

WISDOM HAS NOTHING TO HIDE AND IS FREE TO ALL WHO DESIRE HER.

On the other hand, when we follow Jesus, our time, energy, and money are returned to us, with interest. All of chapter 8 introduces us to a lady who is the exact opposite of Lady Seduction

when we are introduced fully to Lady Wisdom. In verses 1-5 she is described as classy, she is above board, what you see is what you get and there is no hidden agenda with her. The fact is WISDOM HAS NOTHING TO HIDE AND IS FREE TO ALL WHO DESIRE HER.

A. WISDOM IS NOT SEDUCTIVE (Vs. 1-3)

In Verses 1-3, in contrast to Lady Seduction, wisdom is not seductive. Keep this thought in mind. We are all portrayed as young, excitable, inexperienced young men when two ladies approach us. Lady Seduction is hot she is exotic and promises us all sorts of pleasure. However, she is a liar. She only wants to use us to satisfy her insatiable lust and she will discard us when she is through, and we will be broken and left for dead. Now if you remember, she met us in the dark, kissed us and flattered us with all sorts of lies that pumped up our egos and inflamed our lust. She took us behind closed doors where she could get us alone and fill us with lies.

On the other hand, we see in these first three verses that Lady Wisdom comes out in the light. She presents herself publicly in the light of day so we can truly see who she is. She doesn't look exotic she doesn't appear in sexy clothes and she is not hot. However, there is this classy elegance about her it is her inner beauty that calls out to us. She doesn't want to get us alone for evil purposes. She wants to tell her story publicly so anyone is free to dispute her. Look where she appears; she appears on the heights along the way, she appears at the crossroads, she appears at the entrance to the city and at the entrance of public places. What is she calling out? She is saying, "Come into a relationship with me, and I will guarantee you a life filled with joy no matter what you have to face. I will provide you with an abundance of resources. Follow me and you will live, really live."

B. WISDOM IS NOT PREJUDICED (Vs. 4-5)

In verses 4-5, we learn that wisdom is not prejudiced. Lady Seduction would always prey on the simple, the foolish, and the weak. To be sure, Lady Wisdom would like to reach the simple and foolish because she wants to protect them from the dangers of following sin, however, she raises her voice to all people. Look at the last phrase in verse 4 where she calls out to all mankind. Literally it reads, "I call out my voice to the sons of Adam (man)." Wisdom is calling out to you and me. We are all simple and foolish one way or another and sometimes we need information we need to have mature teachers' help us to understand the Bible. We get the information we need to successfully navigate life in the Bible but sometimes we lack experience. That is why we need to be in a discipling relationship. We need more mature Christians to share their experiences with us and walk us through some of these situations and sometimes we need a push to do the right thing. That is why we should surround ourselves with other believers who will hold us accountable for our behavior.

Where do we find wisdom and how do we get to meet her? Right here at church. I hear people say all the time that they don't need to come to church to be a Christian. My question would be, "If you were a Christian, why wouldn't you want to come to church?" Our church is committed to preaching and teaching the Bible. Each week I type out an outline so you can follow the sermon. You can easily check if I am preaching the Word of God or if I have strayed from the text. If you fill in the outlines and keep them, you can do or lead Bible study any time.

Further, we have a Sunday school class that meets every Sunday morning at 8:30 where they study the Bible together. We meet every Friday evening at 7 O'clock for Bible study, singing, and prayer. There is Friday evening Kid's Club for kids up through 8th grade. There are high school and college groups every Saturday night. There are plenty of opportunities to learn and study the Bible. We have plenty of mature believers who are willing to do one-to-one discipleship

and there are plenty of opportunities to serve here at church. I want to encourage each one here this morning to come and meet Lady Wisdom. During the Purpose Driven Life campaign starting Feb. 25, we are offering you a unique opportunity to come and participate in this venture. I will preach on a topic each week, we will all do our personal studies each day, and we have small group meetings that will meet once a week to discuss any questions you may have, it is just a 6-week commitment. Lady Wisdom is calling, are you willing to embrace her? She is a classy lady. **WISDOM HAS NOTHING TO HIDE AND IS FREE TO ALL WHO DESIRE HER.**

II. SHE IS NOT SELF-SERVING (Vs. 6-11)

WISDOM MAKES US BETTER PEOPLE.

Her next attribute is in stark contrast to Lady Seduction. Verses 6-11 describe her as not self-serving, she is not out to use us to further her goals and fulfill her desires. **WISDOM MAKES US BETTER PEOPLE.** I don't know about you, but I have met many people who have changed my life for the good. I am a better person because I got involved with them. Do you have people in your life like that? I hope so. I know that I am only as far as I am in my Christian walk because God placed godly people in my life.

A. WISDOM IS GODLY (Vs. 6-8)

Verses 6-8 remind us that wisdom is godly. The seductive woman flattered us with lies. They were dripping with honey. She sold us the lies by mixing them with passionate kissing. We were out of our minds and the truth was clouded by lust.

In contrast, wisdom speaks the truth in love what she has to say is worthy. Worthy refers to princely, noble, and honorable things. She speaks those words that are right they are correct, true, and upright. She speaks truth. The word there is 'emet' in Hebrew. It refers to the truth in the context of relationship as God approaches us in truth and all the words out of wisdom's mouth are

just. That word refers to righteousness in other words those things that conform themselves to the character and nature of God. Wisdom is not interested in flattering us; Wisdom is not interested in pumping up our egos. Wisdom is interested in showing us who we are and who we can become in Christ. Wisdom teaches us to be more like Christ. Wisdom speaks the truth in love to us. I want this to be very practical, in Philippians 4:8 we are told that wisdom is focused on those things that are true, noble, and right; those things that are pure, lovely and admirable; those things that are excellent or praiseworthy. Those are the things we should focus our attention on.

B. WISDOM IS AVAILABLE (V. 9)

I really like verse 9 because it reminds us that wisdom is available and that wisdom isn't hiding. I know people are always asking me how they can know God's will for their life and then they will put that in terms of, "Where should I go to school? Who should I marry? What job should I take?" Maybe those are legitimate questions, but let me throw out this thought; are you angry with someone and unwilling to forgive them? Let me tell you this, it is God's will that you forgive them. Are you struggling to control your speech or behavior? I can tell you it is God's will that you control your mouth and act graciously. Are you gossiping? I can say without any reservations that it is God's will that you stop that. You see, this is what happens we want to seek out God's will because we are superstitious we think we may be jinxed if we pick the wrong school or wrong job or wrong spouse, but in reality, God may or may not care about those things. But why is it that when we know the clear will of God, we are unwilling to obey it? It seems to me that this is the principle God uses in revealing His will to us. As we submit to those things we know are His will, He then reveals more to us.

In Romans chapter 12, the Apostle Paul informed us that as we offer our bodies as holy and living sacrifices to God, as we refuse to be conformed to this world, and as we allow Him to

transform us by the renewing of our minds, we will then know more and more of His perfect will for us. In other words, the more we reject Lady Seduction and the more we embrace Lady Wisdom, the more we will know and understand God's will for our lives.

That is the other thing I like about Verse 9 that Lady Wisdom is a straight talker. Look at the first phrase in verse 9. Referring to the words of wisdom it says, "they are right." That word right is literally the word straight and that God is a straight talker. Wisdom is straight talk and here is some straight talk; God's wisdom and His will are available for all to hear. But if we are unwilling to obey the clear commands of His will in Scripture, we can be sure that is exactly where we will stop growing and that is exactly where we will stop enjoying the fullness of life in Christ.

C. WISDOM IS VALUABLE (Vs. 10-11)

Please don't think there is any exaggeration in this. Verses 10-11 remind us that wisdom is valuable. When we talk about wisdom or wise people, we think about an old man, sitting in a rocker, scratching his beard and thinking, or an older woman looking out the window and pondering some deep thought. However, wisdom is an action word. Lady Wisdom is a doer as well as a thinker. Verse 10 reminds us that we have to make a choice where the author tells us to choose wisdom over gold. I think this is very interesting. Lady Wisdom doesn't compete with Lady Seduction, she doesn't say, "Choose me over that slutty temptress," Lady Wisdom takes it to a more challenging level. Think about it. The seductive woman promises excitement and sexual pleasure but with silver and gold, one could buy not only excitement and pleasure, one could actually possess the seductive woman and have unlimited power to fulfill any fantasy. So Lady Wisdom isn't afraid of worldly wealth and power she encourages us to choose her over anything this world has to offer. Choice is the key factor here and we are the ones who have to make the choice.

In verse 11 Lady Wisdom makes her plea her reason is that there is nothing in this world that can compare with the relationship she has to offer. When we embrace God's wisdom, lasting peace, joy, and contentment are ours. No amount of money, power, or pleasure can buy that.

Let me summarize this section by saying this; In Philippians 4, the Apostle Paul says if we engage our minds wisely by thinking about things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy, and if we combine right thinking with right behavior, then God's rich peace will be ours.

Maybe there are some attitudes you need to change this morning. Maybe you have been looking for love and excitement in all the wrong places, maybe you are looking for excitement in dangerous places, maybe you have been letting your friends or the world tell you what is desirable or right. Please correct your thinking by spending more time in Bible reading and study. Find someone to disciple you.

On the other hand, maybe you know there are wrong behaviors in your life. Perhaps you need to forgive someone, perhaps you have to give up some addictive behavior, or perhaps you need to become sexually pure. Do not waste time because if we do not embrace wisdom by changing our thinking and behavior, we cannot be blessed any further. We will be stuck right where we are. The fact is we have nothing to offer wisdom but she has everything to offer us. We have everything to gain by choosing her because **WISDOM MAKES US BETTER PEOPLE.**

III. SHE IS AT HOME WITH NOBILITY (Vs. 12-16)

WISDOM IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN CHANNEL POWER FOR GOOD.

The really nice thing about wisdom is that she can meet us at different places in our lives; for example, in Verses 12-16 we find out that wisdom is at home with nobility. Power is a very dangerous thing it has a seductive influence that can corrupt the best of us; **WISDOM IS THE**

ONLY THING THAT CAN CHANNEL POWER FOR GOOD. We can see that when even the best of men and women get seduced by power, there is no end to the evil they can inflict on others but wisdom takes great pains to help us channel power for good.

A. WISDOM'S ROOMMATES (Vs. 12-14)

We are introduced to Wisdom's roommates in verses 12-14. She lives together with prudence. Good rulers need to be crafty, shrewd, resourceful and clever as they make treaties with other nations. Good rulers must protect their people. Good leaders possess knowledge. In other words, they have the right information, experience, and attitude to govern fairly. They possess discretion. In other words, they are able to formulate and carry out godly plans. They are characterized by sound judgment, good counsel and understanding. In other words, they know how to evaluate and give good advice and guidance. They have insight into the way things really are, and not just the way they appear to be.

But attitude is probably the most critical element when dealing with power. Look at Verse 13; to fear the LORD is to hate evil. Wisdom, in concert with God hates pride, arrogance, evil behavior and perverted speech. God embraces the humble, the honest, the truthful, and the modest. Good leaders know that they have been placed in positions of power to serve, not to be served.

B. WISDOM'S ADVISEES (Vs. 15-16)

If that is the case, then let us take a look at some of wisdom's devotees in Verses 15-16. This description is meant to be symbolic of all rulers from the king down to local officials in our country we could say that wisdom is to be the tutor and companion of the President, the Congress, all our judges, and state and local officials. Good solid leadership can only happen with the integration of power and wisdom, rulers are to rule for the benefit of those under them. Righteousness, fairness, compassion, and justice are the things that channel power for good.

You know, we all find ourselves in positions of authority at one time or another. We could be bosses at work or we could be parents, we could be baby sitters or we could be left in charge of our baby brothers or sisters. We could be teachers, doctors, pastors, church leaders, or Sunday school teachers. If you have ever been in a position of power or authority, and if you were totally honest with yourself, you could easily see how seductive this power is. If you occupy a position of authority, or if you find yourself in charge, remember wisdom and her roommates; embrace them, hold on to them, and know that it will be easier to give into Lady Seduction than it will be to remain faithful to Lady Wisdom. I guess all I can say is when you find yourself in a position of authority, quickly find yourself some people who will speak the truth in love to you and hold you accountable. Surround yourself with counselors who will remind you to be humble and submissive because WISDOM IS THE ONLY THING THAT CAN CHANNEL POWER FOR GOOD.

IV. SHE IS AT HOME WITH COMMON FOLK (Vs. 17-21)

WISDOM HAS SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL REWARDS.

Wisdom is not a stuck up lady who is only interested in climbing the social ladder or using us for fulfilling her own lust for power and pleasure like Lady Seduction. Lady Wisdom is not only at home with nobility, in Verses 17-21 she is described as being at home with common folk as well. Here is her message to all of us: WISDOM HAS SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL REWARDS. I don't believe in this popular health and wealth gospel, I don't think following God guarantees that we will not get sick, suffer, and die. I don't think if you give money in the offering that it guarantees God will give you more money in return, however, I do think that if we follow Lady Wisdom rather than Lady Seduction, we will feel better spiritually, physically, and emotionally, and we will keep more of the money we have.

A. WISDOM'S AVAILABILITY (V.17)

Wisdom's availability is described in Verse 17. Not only is she available to the rulers of this world she is available to you and me. Here is where I think we get confused; we can see Lady Seduction, we can turn on our televisions and she is right there. Men and women are right in our face pornography, sex, alcohol, drugs, and gambling are ever present for us to just reach out and touch and because all these temptations are visible, we know they are real. However, Lady Wisdom is more discrete. It is hard to measure 12 pounds of love, it is difficult to see the shape of justice, it is hard to describe purity in physical terms, and because we cannot see Lady Wisdom, we tend to think she is not real. What we see we think is real and what we cannot see we think is unreal however, don't make that mistake. Look at verse 17 and notice how parallel this is to how Jesus tells us to approach God in prayer. Lady Wisdom says, "I love those who love me and those who seek me find me." In other words, we will know the reality of Lady Wisdom when we enter into a relationship with her she is available. Jesus said that if we ask we will receive; if we seek, we will find; and if we knock, the door will be opened for us. But again, wisdom requires a choice.

C. WISDOM'S REWARD (Vs. 18-21)

There is a lot at stake here. Verses 18-21 describe wisdom's rewards. Verse 18 says, "With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity." Actually the word for prosperity is "righteousness" in the Hebrew and as we follow Lady Wisdom by reading and studying the Bible, as we change our minds so that we agree with God's, and as we act out in obedience to God, we will become rich in righteousness from God. This is better than any amount of money. People are hungry to experience peace, joy, and contentment the problem is that we have believed the lies of the world. We think these things come from finding a man or woman to be in a relationship with. We think they come from finding the right job or buying the right toys or we think climbing the corporate or social ladder will get us there but as we have said over and over again this morning,

peace, joy, and contentment come only from filling our minds with right thinking and acting on that knowledge with right behavior. Right thinking + Right behavior = Right feelings. There is no other way to enjoy lasting peace, joy, and contentment other than submitting to God.

Peace, joy, and contentment are valuable enough in themselves, yet Lady Wisdom also promises material blessings as well. In verse 21 she says that she will give us wealth and make our treasures full. Here we see the integration of wealth and wisdom. In general, if we are truly content in life, we will not spend money on Lady Seduction. We will not have to buy the latest computer, or car, or clothes to make us feel good about ourselves. We will not have to throw money away on expensive food or drinks and we will not have to impress anybody with our designer clothes and accessories. People who have embraced Lady Wisdom know where true peace, joy and contentment come from. Think about this; if your life was really filled with the love of God, and if you were not spending money chasing after foolish things, how much more of your money would you have and be able to bank? I want to challenge all of us who may be trying to buy happiness, status, meaning, fulfillment or love, to stop because these things belong to Lady Seduction. She will never be satisfied and always demand more and in the end we are always left empty, anxious, exhausted, and broke. But remember WISDOM HAS SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL REWARDS.

Even though pastors have preached these sorts of messages from the time of King Solomon, many people continue to be seduced by the things of this world. Even King Solomon himself was seduced by the lure of sex with all sorts of exotic women. The Bible states very clearly that these women turned Solomon's heart away from the Lord and his life ended in chaos. That is a shame considering all the wisdom he had been given. I think we would do well by embracing Lady Wisdom, developing a deep relationship with her, and humbly submitting ourselves to her.

Because FALLING IN LOVE WITH LADY WISDOM LEADS TO A HAPPY AND REWARDING LIFE. Being seduced by the lust of this world can only lead to tragedy and death.

Lady Seduction has nothing to offer but disaster.

Bill Bright, in his book Revolution Now, gives this chilling example of some very powerful and important men who followed Lady Seduction.

In 1923 a very important meeting was held at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Attending this meeting were nine of the world's most successful financiers: Charles Schwab, steel magnate; Samuel Insull, president of the largest utility company; Howard Hopson, president of the largest gas company; Arthur Cotton, the greatest wheat speculator; Richard Whitney, president of the New York Stock Net; Leon Fraser, president of the Bank of International Settlements; Jesse Livermore, the great "bear" on Wall Street; and Ivar Krueger, head of the most powerful monopoly.

25 years later, Charles Schwab died in bankruptcy, having lived on borrowed money for 5 years before his death; Samuel Insull died a fugitive from justice and penniless in a foreign land; Howard Hopson was insane; Arthur Cotton died abroad, insolvent; Albert Fall had been pardoned so that he could die at home; Leon Fraser, Jesse Livermore, and Ivar Krueger all died by suicide. All of these men had learned well the art of making money, but none of them had learned how to live.

Jesus states very clearly that He came to give us life, and to give it to us abundantly. Quit chasing the lies of this world. Immerse yourself in God's Word, and marry yourself to wisdom.