DELIGHTING in the LORD
BIBLE STUDY SERIES

WEEK 8
THE HOUSES THEY BUILT: MISS WISDOM AND MISS FOLLY

Proverbs 9

One could imagine, it was a hard life for a woman living in Philippi. Lydia knew the commercial center of Macedonia in Philippi was the best place to be practicing her trade. Tirelessly she worked, day in and day out, gathering the shellfish by the sea that held her precious purple dye. Drop by drop she collected the dye with patience and perseverance. She knew her livelihood and her family depended on it. Her wisdom and diligence paid off as many sought her out for her wares.

That Sabbath day Lydia made her way out of the city to the riverside for prayer and worship. As many gathered, she overhead a few women speaking to two men who apparently had just spent days traveling through the region. Lydia’s heart was pricked as she heard them speak of God. The things they spoke of, she desired. They were speaking of Jesus, sin and salvation. She needed Jesus and received all that Paul and Silas shared. That day she and her whole household were baptized, putting their faith in Jesus. Overjoyed with gratitude towards Paul and Silas, she invited them to come stay at her home.

In Proverbs 9 we will be meeting two very different woman. We will call one Miss Wisdom and the other Miss Folly. Each woman has built a house, but their homes look very different and serve very different purposes. You will see Miss Wisdom, like Lydia, work tirelessly, intelligently and resourcefully. She will build a strong and secure home whose foundation is set on God. Her heart will be set on hospitality and invites all who desire to come. She will invite them to stay with her and share a meal in the hopes of not only filling their bellies but also their hearts with the things of God. She never left any detail overlooked, always had an open door to both the wise and the foolish, and desired to offer others a life of blessing that only comes from God.

Miss Folly, you will see, is quite the opposite. She is foolish in all she does; lazy, loud, and unskilled. Sitting idly in her doorstep day in and day out, she calls to those who pass by but offers them nothing of value. Her house is unstable, just like her ways. Both women built a house, but only one knew a strong foundation’s secret; the house must stand on the knowledge of God. In God is wisdom and understanding. Lydia knew this and Miss Wisdom knew this. Do you?

RECEIVING God’s Word

Open in Prayer
Read Proverbs 9
Experience 1: The House Wisdom Built - Proverbs 9:1-12

1. In Proverbs 9:1-3 wisdom is referred to as a woman once again. She has been busy at work building her home and preparing a banquet. Listed below are all the things that Miss Wisdom has accomplished while working and preparing. Next to each phrase, describe in your own words the importance of her work and the character trait it takes for these to be accomplished.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>Character Trait Exhibited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 1</td>
<td>“hewn out her seven pillars”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 2</td>
<td>“slaughtered her meat”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 2</td>
<td>“mixed her wine”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 2</td>
<td>“furnished her table”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 3</td>
<td>“sent out her maidsens”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Read Proverbs 9:3-6. Answer the following questions from these verses.

a. Miss Wisdom is not exclusive in who she invites to her home and banquet. How does she go about inviting people?
b. What three different types of people does she make sure to include? Why?

c. According to verse 6, why does Miss Wisdom eagerly extend this invitation for wisdom?

d. What do her actions convey about her heart toward others?

e. How do you see God’s heart represented in her actions?

3. In Proverbs 9:7-9 Miss Wisdom addresses four different types of people: the scoffer, the wicked man, the wise man and the just man. She knows these people well and warns what might happen if they are corrected, rebuked, instructed or taught. Next to each type of person listed below, write the warned response.

• “the scoffer” (corrected)
  Warned response:
• “the wicked man” (rebuked)
  Warned response:

• “the wise man” (instructed)
  Warned response:

• “the just man” (taught)
  Warned response:

a. Read Matthew 7:6. How does this reinforce the warning Miss Wisdom gives in Proverbs 9:7-9?
4. Although stated slightly differently in Proverbs 1:7, the central theme of Proverbs is repeated again in Proverbs 9:10. Compare these two verses. How do they add to your understanding of wisdom?

   a. Wisdom and knowledge come from an understanding of God. Explain why wisdom begins with a right relationship to God.

5. Read Proverbs 9:11. What benefit does wisdom bring to life?

6. According to Proverbs 9:12, who is ultimately affected by choosing wisdom or scoffing at wisdom?

**Experience 2: The House Folly Built: Proverbs 9:13-18**

1. The foolish woman is described in Proverbs 9:13-18. She, too, builds a house, but her ways are much different from Miss Wisdom’s building strategy. How is Miss Folly described in Proverbs 9:13? Explain these descriptions in your own words.
2. We were told back in Proverbs 8:3 that wisdom sits in the place of prominence at the city gate, and in Proverbs 9:3 Miss Wisdom cries out from the highest places of the city. According to Proverbs 9:14, where does Miss Folly sit and how does she undermine Miss Wisdom?

3. Read Proverbs 9:15-17. Miss Folly also invites the simple and those who lack understanding. What does her invitation sound like?

   a. Does she have a banquet prepared for her guests? What does she offer them?

4. In Proverbs 9:11 we learned that Miss Wisdom offers life and blessings. According to Proverbs 9:18, what does Miss Folly offer those who accept her invitation?

5. Read Matthew 7:24-27. Describe the house of the wise and the house of the fool. How does this reinforce what was taught in Proverbs 9?
Experience 3: Lydia

Read Acts 16:6-15

1. Read Acts 16:6-14. Paul, Timothy, Silas and Luke are called by God to go to Macedonia to preach the Gospel. What do they do on the Sabbath day and who do they speak to?

2. From verse 14-15, how is Lydia described and how does she respond to Paul’s message of the Gospel?

3. From verses 11-15, describe how Lydia is an example of a woman who built her house on wisdom.

ACTING on God’s Word

This past summer I (Brenda) finally decided to tackle remodeling my downstairs living room, dining room and entryway. These three rooms had not been updated since we moved into the house over 20 years ago. Needless to say, the task was long overdue. I decided that I would not hire a general contractor but would oversee the project myself. As each person was hired to do the work necessary for the remodeling, delays inevitably occurred, mistakes were made, and the entire job took much longer than I had anticipated. Throughout the summer, I would look around at drop cloths, heavy layers of dust and partially completed rooms and grow weary of the lengthy process. Although I was not sorry to see my outdated hunter green carpet, floral curtains and gold fixtures taken down, I couldn’t wait to see the rooms completed. One day I lamented on the phone to Stacy (who enjoys taking on such projects!) how tired I was of the upheaval in my house and how frustrated I was at how many delays I had encountered. Stacy reminded me that although the chaos of remodeling is not fun, the end result is worth all the work and disruption. Now that the project is done, I must say, I do love how the downstairs has turned out. As I look around at the fresh paint, wood floors, new carpet and updated accents, I can say it was well worth the effort.
Miss Wisdom is also working on her house in Proverbs 9. She has not hired a general contractor nor sub-contractors. She completes much of the hard work herself. We do not read about her growing weary of the tasks nor exhibiting frustration over what she needs to complete. In fact, Proverbs reads in such a way that we could easily conclude that she is enthusiastic about her work and productivity. Perhaps Miss Wisdom is looking ahead to what the finished product will look like when it is completed rather than getting bogged down in the process. Regardless, she seems to understand that a job well done requires hard work, and she is willing to do it. Let’s examine Miss Wisdom’s ways and see what we can glean from her approach as well as the blessing that results.

1. Proverbs 9:1-2 says, “Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table.” These are tasks that wisdom completes. How is Miss Wisdom taking care of her home?

   a. How does Miss Wisdom demonstrate Godly wisdom in her actions?

2. Proverbs 9:4a and verse 6 say this, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here! Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding.” How is Miss Wisdom taking care of others?
a. Why is reaching out to others after caring for our home demonstrating wisdom?

3. Proverbs 9:10 says this, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” How does Miss Wisdom take care of herself?

a. Why is it important to tend to our own mind, body, soul and spirit? How does this demonstrate wisdom?

4. Proverbs 9:11 says this, “For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of your life will be added to you.” How can this be a blessing to Miss Wisdom?
DELIGHTING in God’s Word

Reflecting back on our chapter, how has the Lord prompted you to pray?

Write a verse from the chapter that God has spoken to your heart.

Close in Prayer