Proverbs 9:1-6, 8-10, 13-18 (NRSV)

1 Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars.
2 She has slaughtered her animals, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table.
3 She has sent out her servant-girls, she calls from the highest places in the town,
4 “You that are simple, turn in here!” To those without sense she says,
5 “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.
6 Lay aside immaturity, and live, and walk in the way of insight.”
7 A scoffer who is rebuked will only hate you; the wise, when rebuked, will love you.
8 Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning.
9 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.
13 The foolish woman is loud; she is ignorant and knows nothing.
14 She sits at the door of her house, on a seat at the high places of the town,
15 calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way,
16 “You who are simple, turn in here!” And to those without sense she says,
17 “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”
18 But they do not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.
VOCABULARY

• **Wisdom** – Good judgment.
• **Hewn** – Cut or carved wood or stone.
• **Immaturity** – Lacking the wisdom usually associated with adults.
• **Insight** – A clear perception of something.
• **Scoffer** – One who ridicules others.
• **Rebuke** – To give criticism.
• **Sheol** – The grave or place of the dead.

**INTRODUCTION**

“Since we are all here eating dinner together, let’s decide what we want to do this week,” Mrs. Barnes said. The Barnes family always spent time together one evening a week.

“I hate taking time out of my life to do stuff with my family!” Carmen rolled her eyes.

“Carmen, your friends are not as important as spending time with us.” Mr. Barnes shook his head in disgust.

“Okay, I have an idea.” Mrs. Barnes didn’t know how they would respond. “Mount Zion Church is having a missionary from Asia speak on Thursday night. The missionary will also have his family present to talk about their experiences living in various parts of the world.”

“I prefer going to eat pizza.” Carmen interjected.

“We will vote. All in favor of going to eat pizza, raise your hand.” Mr. Barnes noticed only Carmen and Carla raised their hands.

“All in favor of going to hear the missionary and his family speak, raise your hand.” Mr. Barnes and his wife as well as
Scott and Ken raised their hands.

“Okay. We are going to Mount Zion Church. Carmen and Carla, it will be a great learning experience for us all,” Mrs. Barnes stated.

*How valuable is the wisdom the missionary will share? In today’s lesson we are discussing the invitation to follow wise versus foolish paths.*

**BIBLE STORY**

Within Proverbs 9, two invitations to a feast were sent out. The first invitation was sent out by wisdom, once again personified as a woman (vs. 1-12). The house built by wisdom lacks nothing. It is complete and perfect. Wisdom’s house is described as having seven pillars—like a large house, big enough to hold many guests.

Wisdom was portrayed as a responsible woman of character. She has prepared food and drinks, then sets the table. The meal is healthy and provides life-sustaining nourishment. The call to come was from wisdom and her servants. Wisdom bids the simple to come eat at her feast, live, and walk in the right path. Those who are proud, arrogant, hateful, and evil will not accept correction. But those who are seeking wisdom, welcome, and love the opportunity to be corrected. This demonstrates they are beginning to get wiser.

Verse 10 says, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” The wise have a loving reverence for God that includes submission to God and obedience to God’s Word. We get the knowledge of God by getting to know God, and insight about what God is teaching us. The benefits of wisdom consist of a longer life, plus much more (vs. 11-12). The foolish will suffer the consequences of their actions.

The second invitation to a feast comes from the foolish
woman (vs.13-18). The foolish woman was loud, ignorant, and lacked good judgment. All she does is leisurely sit around doing nothing. The foolish woman sits at her door and calls out for the simple to come to her feast, just like wisdom. But the difference is, the foolish woman offers unhealthy food that was stolen. It seems so enticing. Sin often seems more exciting than living according to the wisdom contained in God’s Word. Those who accept the invitation to feast with the foolish will end up in the place of the dead. We all have to make a choice which invitation we will accept.

**LIFE APPLICATION**

Draw pictures of foods that are healthy. Draw pictures of foods that are unhealthy. Discuss the effect healthy versus unhealthy (junk) foods have on our bodies. How do you think sin affects us?

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<th>HEALTHY FOODS:</th>
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How do you choose friends? Wisdom helps us choose healthy relationships. Compare and contrast healthy versus unhealthy relationships. How can our relationships with others personally affect us?
Using your electronic devices, search for a video on building a home (www.youtube.com). After watching the video, discuss how building a home is similar to using wisdom as the foundation of our lives.

SUMMARY

Wisdom is life-giving. But those who act foolishly will be destroyed. It is urgent for us to make a choice. God desires us to have a relationship with God and obey God’s commands. This is the path to wisdom. The path you choose determines your destiny.

CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we love and need you. Please forgive us for being foolish at times. We are committed to choosing the path that leads to life, which is through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast” (#234 - AME Church Hymnal)