Wisdom vs. Folly

Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight (Proverbs 9:6).

Scripture: Proverbs 9:1-6, 8-10, 13-18
Song: “Rescuer”

My family loves to hike. Even my five-year-old daughter loves the thrill of a new trail and the excitement of exploring an unknown path. In our desert mountain home, it is of the utmost importance to have plenty of water for every hike. When we visit family and hike a Texas forest, it is just as important to wear bug spray to protect from ticks and mosquitoes. The amount of wisdom we use in our preparation affects how enjoyable our hike becomes.

Two women in today’s proverb, Wisdom and Folly, call out to the passersby of the town. It is a choice to follow either one. The secret to success is laid out clearly: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (v. 10). The relationship we cultivate with God, including time in His Word, leads us to wisdom and understanding. There isn’t really a middle ground. Choosing Wisdom or Folly means turning your back on the other.

James 1:5 says that God will give anyone wisdom who asks for it. That’s amazing! Any believer can ask for and receive wisdom. Choosing wisdom is as simple as asking for God to give it so that you can live wisely today.

Lord, give me wisdom in my choices and words today. Help me to discern what is right and be bold in practicing correct living. I pray that You would help me make the choice of wise living into a habit that is part of my life always. For Your glory, I pray. Amen.
June 29

Equipped for Jesus

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves” (Matthew 10:16).

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:16-23  
**Song:** “Good Shepherd (Lead On)”

My 13-year-old world had been turned upside down by my parents’ separation. The security I had known was ripped apart, and I didn’t know where I fit in anymore. A friend suggested I attend a teen Bible study, and there I found what I needed. When I accepted Christ, my heart became full of love, peace, and joy. I wanted to share it with all the world.

Over the next few weeks, I shared my excitement with my high school peers. It is an understatement to say that they didn’t share my enthusiasm. In fact, many began avoiding me and some even ridiculed me. Jesus warns His followers that they will be sent out like sheep among wolves. He is warning of the persecution they will face as they spread God’s message to the world.

Jesus has never declared that the Christian life will be easy, but He has promised help through the Holy Spirit. He will speak through you and protect you. As you head out into the world today, be confident that the great shepherd is watching over you. As the wolves of the world surround you, look to your heavenly Father for guidance and protection.

**Father,** help us to boldly share Your good news today. In Jesus’ name, amen.
A Faith-Filled Heart

“How strong, do not fear; your God will come” (Isaiah 35:4).

Scripture: Isaiah 35:3-10
Song: “Fear Is a Liar”

How could a routine exam lead to an X-ray, a PET scan, and ultimately a diagnosis of colon cancer? My mom had a nodule on her lung, which was being followed periodically by her doctor. During one particular visit, it was decided to do additional examinations to gather more information. To everyone’s surprise, including the doctors, the findings indicated colon cancer. With no prior signs or symptoms, these results sent the family into a whirlwind. More tests were run, options discussed, and ultimately surgery was performed.

Throughout the entire time, our faith never wavered. We held on to today’s verse in Isaiah: “Be strong, do not fear.” Our God changes fearful hearts to strong faith-filled hearts. How does He accomplish this? He asks that we trust Him. This doesn’t mean that we ignore our circumstances or not pursue medical treatment. But it does require us to believe in our almighty God’s strength.

Empty your fears onto God and trust Him to respond. Emptying our hearts of fear and filling them with faith might become a daily discipline. As you face the trials of life, turn your fears over to God. He will come to you and give you all that you need to stand strong in His love and protection.

Almighty Father, as life’s trials come my way, help me to empty my heart of fear and refill it with the faith and strength that come only from You. In Jesus’ name, amen.
Heavenly Test

“I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he” (Luke 7:28).

Scripture: Luke 7:24-28
Song: “Life Song”

Life is full of tests. School tests, driving tests, and license certification tests are just a few. Social media offers a multitude of self-discovery tests. There is one test, however, that I desire to pass on a daily basis—a heavenly test. Each morning I ask God to guide my steps and place His desires on my heart. At the end of the day, when I do a self-assessment, I find some areas where I feel that I have failed the heavenly test.

In Luke, Jesus is assessing John the Baptist’s work. He tells the gathered crowd that “there is no one greater than John.” What an amazing assessment! The good news is that I can hear the same about my life. Jesus ends the verse by saying that “the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” The “least” is us—you and me. We become greater than John because of the Holy Spirit, who guides and directs us.

Today as you face the numerous tests life will throw at you, remember to put Jesus first. Rely on Him and the Holy Spirit to guide your actions. May you find, at the end of the day, that you have passed the only test that truly matters—the heavenly test.

Father, help me to rely on the Holy Spirit today for guidance as I walk through life’s tests. In Jesus’ name, amen.
Actions Speak Louder than Words

Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see” (Matthew 11:4).

Scripture: Matthew 11:1-6
Song: “Here I Am, Lord”

As in most Caribbean islands, the Dominican Republic has two worlds. One encompasses the glamorous vacation resorts that attract people with their beauty. At the opposite extreme are the encampments that exist within sugarcane fields. The homes are tiny, food is scarce, and medical treatment is mostly nonexistent. During four mission trips, it is with the people of these communities that I have spent my time.

I don’t speak Spanish or Creole, so my ability to communicate is severely limited. We communicate with these people in the love language of Jesus. Our team, over 25 years, has built homes, schools, and a hospital that has saved thousands of lives. We have taught people how to make sustainable gardens. We have brought medicine and taught proper hygiene. We have shown the people Jesus’ love by caring about their lives.

Jesus told John the Baptist’s disciples to report back to John what they heard and saw. Jesus emphasized His deeds as a testament to what His service on earth was. He could have boasted that He was the Son of God, but rather He wanted to be remembered for what He did. Today, let’s look for ways to demonstrate God’s love through our actions and our care for others. May our deeds speak with our words as we communicate the love language of Jesus.

Father, today may we serve You through our service to others. In Jesus’ name, amen.
Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed because they did not repent (Matthew 11:20).

Scripture: Matthew 11:20-24
Song: “The Lord Is My Rock”

I was blessed with three children in a four-year span of time. When my oldest daughter turned four, my son was two and the baby girl was four months old. Life, for many years, was busy, chaotic, exhausting, and demanding. I was often pulled in, what seemed like, 100 different directions. As I laid my head down at night I often wondered how I had maintained my strength and sanity throughout the day. The answer was always the same, Jesus. He became my rock and my hope.

As the children grew and life became more predictable, I found that I relied upon Jesus less and less. There were certainly days when I felt that I was stretched too thin, but during those times I looked for inner strength rather than turning my eyes to Jesus. I had become like the people Jesus talks about in today’s Scripture. They had spent time with Him, watched Him do miracles, and yet they hadn’t turned to God.

Jesus wants to be present and active in our lives. He doesn’t want His power or deeds to go unnoticed by us. He is available and waiting for us to come to Him in prayer and to walk with Him. Look for His presence in your life today, marvel at His handiwork, and draw strength from His unending love.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your power in our lives. May we rest in Your strength for our lives, our Rock and Redeemer. In Christ’s name, amen.
Who Are You Yoked With?

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

Scripture: Matthew 11:25-30
Song: “Come unto Me”

“No swimming, the current is too strong” was the warning posted along the beach. The six ladies who had gathered for our annual getaway paid little heed to the warning. After a few hours of basking in the sun, we headed into the water to cool off. As we laughed and splashed, we never saw the thundering swell making its way to shore. As it began to crash near us, however, we realized the necessity of the warning. We grabbed onto each other as tightly as possible and prayed. For a moment, as the water crashed over us, we were terrified; but we came out on the other side intact. Our physical connection with each other had held us through the storm of the wave.

We gain support against the physical, emotional, and spiritual storm waves that come at us each day when we take on the yoke that Jesus offers to us. He is joined together with us. And because of His strength, through the Holy Spirit, we can stand and not get washed away.

Take His yoke today. Be bound to Him and rely on Him for all your needs. Don’t try to go alone through the waves of life; instead rely on the one who is gentle, is humble, and is offering rest for your soul.

Jesus, You are our strength. May we remain yoked to You no matter what storms come our way. In Your name, amen.