

# Proverbs Ch1v8-33 - Wise Listening

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Date: 11 May 2025

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[ 0 : 00 ] Thank you.

Well, good morning. It's good to see you all! Thank you. I do commend to you all the events that have been mentioned next Sunday, Tim Challey's, for the teens, and also next Sunday evening as well. It'll be wisdom indeed, so I commend that to you, and also Wednesday nights. Why not make it your priority to join with others as we study God's Word together, looking at grace for all of life, how we need it.

I have a little booklet here. Our series that we've just started is on Proverbs. Here's an overview. You want to know what Proverbs is all about? There's a booklet on the table, one per family. Do take it and read, and it'll give you insight into what it's all about. That's something that Sam has put together, and it'll be helpful for you.

Well, we're going to read God's Word, Proverbs chapter 1, from verse, well, we're going to look together this morning from verse 8 to 33, but our reading is going to start in at verse 20.

Proverbs chapter 1, verse 20. Proverbs 1, starting at verse 20.

[ 2 : 12 ] Out in the open, wisdom calls aloud. She raises her voice in the public square. On top of the wall, she cries out. At the city gate, she makes her speech. How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?

Repent at my rebuke. Then I will pour out my thoughts to you. I will make known to you my teachings. But since you refuse to listen when I call, and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand, since you disregard all my advice and do not accept my rebuke, I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you. When disaster strikes you. I will mock when calamity overtakes you. When calamity overtakes you like a storm. When disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind. When distress and trouble overwhelm you. Then they will call to me, but I will not answer. They will look for me, but will not find me, since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord. Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. For the waywardness of the simple will kill them. The complacency of fools will destroy them will destroy them. But whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease without fear of harm. Well, let's pray and ask for God's help.

Our Father God, your word is wise. It is good and best for us. So give us ears that we might hear clearly.

Hearts that will be receptive. And hands that are ready to do your work and feet that will walk your paths.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Sat-navs in Google Maps.

[ 5 : 03 ] You know how they work. You key in your destination and you just follow the route. Simple. The problem is, I don't always like the route that I'm being taken on.

Although I'm given clear instruction, I ignore the directions. And what's really annoying is, when I go my own way, it keeps telling me to turn around.

Rerouting. Take the next left. But of course, Johnny knows best and pays no attention to these warnings. And then comes that moment.

I'm not where I thought I was. Why didn't I listen? Have you ever had that experience? You've set your mind on something.

You've decided on a course of action. And despite the advice from others and even their rebukes, you plough on ahead. And then comes that moment.

[ 6 : 13 ] Why did I not listen? Well, our text today is all about wise listening. There's a call to listen.

Verse 8. Listen, my son. There's a warning if we don't listen. In verse 24.

But since you refuse to listen, there will be disaster ahead. And there's blessing if we do listen.

Verse 33. But whoever listens to me will live in safety. You see, listening isn't just hearing something or understanding something.

Wise listening is doing what you have heard. And Proverbs is all about wisdom. We can summarize it like this. Wisdom is God's word to live God's way in God's world.

[ 7 : 25 ] Wisdom not only listens to God's word. Wisdom does what God's word says. James, one of the authors of the New Testament, also well known for his wisdom, put it like this.

Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. So are we listening? Two messages, two voices we are to listen to this morning. Wisdom's warning and wisdom's calling. Wisdom's warning is directed to young people, young adults.

It applies to us all, but I think in particular to young adults and young people and wisdom's calling to those who are a bit older and further down the tracks.

But nonetheless, it is applicable to us all. So first, wisdom's warning. Wisdom's warning is like a father talking to their son or daughter who are about to head out into the big bad world.

[ 8 : 46 ] They're ready to leave home, off to college or off to work. Verse 8. Listen, my son, to your father's instruction.

Do not forsake your mother's teaching. They are a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.

Listen to what I am about to say to you and you will keep on God's straight path. You will be like an athlete who finishes the race and is given a garland that is like a champion's crown will be placed on your head or a medal around your neck.

Listen very carefully to what I am about to say. Well, what do our parents say? Verse 10.

My son, if sinful men entice you, do not give in to them. If they say, come along with us.

[ 9 : 57 ] Why don't you join our gang? Why don't you be part of our group? Come along with us. Let's lie in wait for innocent blood.

Let's ambush some harmless soul. Let's take advantage of other people. verse 12. Let's swallow them alive like the grave and whole like those who go down to the pit.

Let's control them. And if we do, verse 13, oh, we will get all sorts of valuable things and we will fill our houses.

Yes, we will have our own homes and we will fill it with our riches and our plunder. cast lots with me. Let's play cards together and the winner, well, they'll get to pick the best of the lot.

We'll share the loot. My son, do not go along with them and do not set foot on their paths.

[ 11 : 07 ] get rich and fast. Get rich and fast. It's not every young person's dream. We're all enticed by this luxurious living and the easiest way to get rich is to prey on the weak and the vulnerable.

It's called, look at the middle of verse 19, ill-gotten gain. In other words, making easy money at the expense of other people.

young men, you can drive around in that luxury car and wear that Rolex watch. Young women, you can dress in Gucci and Armani and, well, you can holiday as you please.

Oh, it's an enticing lifestyle. But be warned, verse 18, these people who call you to join them and be part of their group, these men lie in wait for their own blood.

They ambush only themselves. They're digging their own grave. Such are the paths of all who go after unjust or ill-gotten gain.

[ 12 : 33 ] It takes away the life of those who get it. You see, unjust gain, you will reap lots. But unjust gain is always temporary gain.

In fact, it's eternal loss. I was reading a book recently by Paul Williams, one of Ireland's top crime journalists.

He records in it the life of a man called Austin Higgins who was a major boss, major crime boss in the 80s. Eventually, he was shot by the guards.

And after Austin died, Williams interviewed the partner and the mother. This is what the mum or the mother said or the the partner.

She said, when I get older, I'm going to tell my kids what happened to their father. I don't want them to fall into the same trap. I don't want them getting mixed up in crime.

[ 13 : 43 ] The mother interacted. Sometimes I get really mad. He was such a fool to get mixed up in that mess. Like so many young criminals, Austin was lured in by the promise of easy money and excitement.

A parent's regret and a partner's fear. It's extraordinary, isn't it, that account? It's almost straight out of the book of Proverbs.

Stop! Listen! Don't get enticed. Don't go down that path. You see, Proverbs, which was written almost 3,000 years ago, still speaks to us today.

It's eternal wisdom. Of course, violent crime is not the only way to make fast money. It might be the dirty world of politics, jobs for the boys, and brown envelopes under the desks.

It could be the underhand ways of bank traders exploiting the system for themselves. It can be overcharging customers or underpaying workers, cash in hand or false expenses.

[15:08] There's no shortage of voices saying, come with us, join our group, and you will get all kinds of valuable things. Now, through the words of scripture, God is warning us like a father to his son who is about to leave home and make their way in life.

Feel the weight of God's hands upon your shoulders. Feel the gaze of his eyes.

Listen to his clear, wise words. Be warned, unjust gain is always temporary gain.

In fact, it's eternal loss. It will not end with a garland of grace, but a grave of regret. Listen to the warning of wisdom.

Now, before we move on, let me speak directly to those of us who are parents here today, or particularly those who are fathers.

[16:29] God has given us a very precious gift, your sons and your daughters. As a father, you have a responsibility to be opening up the wise wisdom of God's word and speaking to it to your children.

So let me ask you, and I ask myself, when was the last time you sat down and opened the Bible and talked to your sons or your daughters about life and the things that they are going to face in the years ahead?

When have you prayed for your son and daughter that they will keep to the paths that they are raised?

I think we all need to reflect deeply on our calling as fathers and mothers, particularly fathers, to be teaching our children.

And young people, young teens who are here today, still living at home under your parents' care, what's your response? Here they go again, boring.

[17:52] No. Verse 8, listen to your father's instruction. Do not forsake your mother's teaching.

They're not stupid. They weren't born yesterday. Listen to their wisdom. They've gathered wisdom over the years.

They are sharing God's word with you. They are seeking to put it into practice for your good. And how you respond to what they say will shape your life and the direction you go.

So first, let us listen to wisdom's warning. Let us all listen to wisdom's warning. Second voice that we are to listen to is wisdom's calling.

Wisdom's calling is like a concerned mother pursuing her wayward child. Here the son or child has already left home and they're now in the big bad world living life in the city going their own way.

[19:07] They're further down the path of life but it is God's way. Verse 20. Out in the open wisdom calls aloud.

She raises her voice in the public square. On top of the wall she cries out. At the city gate she makes her speech. There she is searching.

On one of our family holidays our son Ethan went missing. The problem was it was in the middle of a crowded downtown city.

Of course we searched everywhere. We even called out. How could we possibly leave our son wander around on his own.

We had to find him. And look at wisdom. She is searching verse 20. She calls aloud. She raises her voice.

[20:13] She cries out. She makes her speech verse 22. How long will you who are simple love your simple ways?

How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? How long will you follow the wisdom of the world?

How long will you keep walking away from the wise words of God? Can you hear wisdom's pursuit? Maybe you have been walking your own path.

Perhaps you've keyed in your own destination and you've taken your own route in life. Wisdom is calling you. Can you hear her voice?

You see wisdom is calling us to turn back. Look at verse 23. Repent at my rebuke.

[ 21 : 23 ] stop walking. Turn around. Come back. Like the voice of Google Maps. Rerouting.

Go around the roundabout and come back. You see repentance means turning from our own wisdom and listening to God's wisdom.

It's to admit that well I'm a fool and I need to submit to God's rule. It's a desire to listen to God's word and to live God's way in God's world.

Stop. Turn around. Come back. You see not only are we called to turn back but the wisdom that is presented to us here.

This concerned mother calling to her wayward son. Well it's a picture isn't it? It's imagery but it has become a reality for us.

[ 22 : 35 ] Look with me please to Luke's gospel and chapter 15. Luke's gospel chapter 15. Amen. Amen.

Amen. You see like wisdom shouting out in the city for the wayward son God in his wisdom has pursued us through his son the Lord Jesus.

As Jesus began his ministry the religious leaders complained that Jesus was eating with the sinners and tax collectors those who were getting rich at the expense of others those who had chosen their own path in life and in response Jesus said oh it's not the healthy who need the doctor but the sick those who've wandered down their wrong path I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance to come back now in Luke chapter 15 Jesus tells a story to show us what this would be like we know it don't we a son asked his father for an inheritance!

In other words he wished his father dead so that he could get on with his life in his own wisdom he had rejected his father but ill gotten gain is always temporary gain his life had become a mess verse 17 then he came to his senses he said how many of my father's hired servants have food to spare! And here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him father I have sinned against heaven and against you I am no longer worthy to be called your son make me like one of your hired servants so he got up and went to his father but while he was still a long way off his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him he ran to his son threw his arms around him and kissed him the son said to him father I have sinned against heaven and against you I am no longer worthy to be called your son but the father said to his servants quick bring the best robe and put it on him a sign of welcome and restoration put a ring and sandals on his feet a sign of acceptance and blessing bring the fattened calf and kill it let's have a feast and celebrate for the son of mine was dead and is alive again he was lost and is found so they began to celebrate let's go back to proverbs you see god in his wisdom is calling out to us through his son he pursues us he longs for us that we would turn back when we have wandered away come home come home to where you belong and when we do oh what a welcome closed afresh a garland of grace is placed on our head welcome home my child welcome home but we must also be careful to ignore the voice is both foolish and dangerous it will be like a storm that will suddenly come on you do you see it there in proverbs chapter 2 verse 27 when calamity!

[ 27 : 15 ] overtakes you overtakes you like a storm when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind when distress and trouble overwhelm you it'll be like a pleasure yacht with all those on board heading out into the open sea but the warning has been given the weather forecast is clear don't leave the shore a storm is coming it's dangerous you will not survive verse 24 but since you refuse to listen when I call and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand since you disregard all my advice and do not accept my rebuke I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you

I will mock when calamity overtakes you if we refuse to listen a day is coming a storm is on its way and God will laugh at us not in a disdainful way but at the utter stupidity of not listening and as they head out in that boat into the open seas the danger suddenly becomes clear verse 28 then they will call to me but I will not answer they will look for me but will not find me God has come to seek and save the lost but a day will come when that search and rescue will be called off and all hope will be lost you will reap your reward verse 30 since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes those who refuse

God's gracious word will be left to face the storm of God's judgment you see that's why Jesus came he came to pursue us he came to take the judgment that we deserve for all our foolish living and on

the cross that innocent man Jesus the God man takes the full brunt of the storm God's wrath falls on him like a whirlwind but all who trust him are safe and secure don't be a fool hear the pursuit of wisdom calling you listen to the wise words of God you see if we do repent God will not only welcome you he will change your life so that you become a pursuer of others look back at verse 23 repent at my rebuke then

I will pour out my thoughts to you literally I will pour out my spirit upon you and I will make known to you my teachings God's word his wisdom will become our delight and joy no longer something to be turned away but we will desire his ways and we will walk in his paths in fact like wisdom we will call out to one another when we have wandered away like wisdom we will pursue others in love and we will gently warn James puts it like this this is our calling my brothers and sisters if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back remember this whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins maybe you're thinking today of a child a son or a daughter who has wandered

God in his wisdom and by his spirit is calling them back we can trust God to do his work but God does his work through people like us for we are all prone to wander we all turn our back on wisdom we all close our ears to our voice that's why God has given to us one another in the family of this church so that we can speak the gospel afresh into each other's lives saying turn back come home take heed of the way in which you are going for God is a God of grace his wisdom is good it will be like a garland of grace a champion's crown that he will place on your head pursue wanderers just as [ 33 : 36 ] God has pursued us let's keep our Bibles open we're going to pray focus on verse 32 and verse 33 let's pray for the waywardness of the simple will kill them and the complacency of fools will destroy them but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease without fear of harm our father God we thank you for the wisdom of your word we thank you for the clear warning you have given father we pray that by your spirit you will continue to pursue those who have wandered from your path that they might yet hear your voice repent and be welcomed home by our loving father and would you help us that we would pursue others in grace and in truth help us to look out for one another to care for one another and to keep us walking on the path that is good please help us in

Jesus name amen we're going to sing a song that reflects the way that perhaps we once walked I once was lost in darkest night yet thought I knew the way but our ways our wisdom are always going to fail we turn afresh to the grace of God who welcomes us back home let's stand together as we sing