

God's Word for our consideration is Proverbs 9:1-6.

**Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars.
She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.
She has sent out her servants, and she calls from the highest point of the city,
“Let all who are simple come to my house!”
To those who have no sense she says,
“Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.
Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight.”**

This is God's Word!

In the Name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, Dear Christian Friends,

Every time you open a magazine or a newspaper, or about every 7 minutes or so while you are watching television, you are bombarded with often outrageous advertising. Remember the one that claimed, “Diamonds are forever.” Are they really? General Motors once boasted that a Chevrolet is “Like a rock.” Is that really true? Another commercial would have had us believe that, “When you've said Budweiser, you've said it all.” Is that possible? Hardly! But ads are tempting, and the commercial that I used to find myself most wanting to believe was one by Nike. It was composed in such a way that an aspiring basketball player, like myself at an earlier age, would be led to believe that in a pair of their “Air Jordan” shoes a person could soar like Michael Jordan above the rim. Now you know that can't be true—at least not in my case! Therefore, I have concluded that commercial advertising is not to be trusted, and certainly not to be considered as a source of absolute truth.

How different are the claims made in the Bible—God's Word. They are different because the Lord has always practiced truth in advertising.

TRUTH IN ADVERTISING

In these words from Proverbs, we encounter a “good news” marketing campaign being conducted by Wisdom, personified as a woman, as most abstract nouns are.

WISDOM'S ADVERTISED PRODUCT

The product advertised is God's plan of salvation. That plan is pictured as a mansion ready to receive guests for a banquet that is already prepared. Our text says, **“Wisdom has built her house; she has set up its seven pillars. She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine; she has also set her table.”** (*vv. 1,2*).

There is no special significance in the number seven in this verse. Seven pillars merely point to the large size of the house. The emphasis is on its ample space. There is plenty of room in Wisdom's house. The food is prepared, and there's more than enough for all who come. The spiced wine has been mixed. The table is set. The picture points to the fact that Wisdom has done everything for her guests. This banquet is just what it appears to be. Wisdom has advertised what by faith we see, and what we hear promised, is what we get.

Within the context of Scripture, we know that this house is **“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”** Paul proclaimed **“Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone”** (*Ephesians 2:20*). Though we cannot comprehend such graciousness, we profess that there is complete truth in Wisdom's advertising. Nothing here is exaggerated. This is the real thing!

God's prophet Isaiah foretold of this banquet. He wrote, **“On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines”** (*Isaiah 25:6*).

The banquet has already been served. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was slaughtered and served up for us on the Cross. Jesus said, **“I am the living bread that came down from heaven... This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”** (*John 6:51a,c*).

When I was a kid, I always knew that someone special was coming for supper when the seldom seen china and silver appeared on our dining room table. My mother set those things out only for very special occasions when those near and dear to her would be guests at our home for supper. When we hear Wisdom's product advertised, and recognize our need for this banquet, we are led to ask, “Who is invited to this supper?” The unexpected answer is, “We are!”

God's practice is very different from my mother's. He set his table on Calvary for those who did not care for his house or the supper that he had planned and prepared for his guests. The world could not fully appreciate his graciousness, not even the people to whom he had entrusted the invitation. In his infinite wisdom, however, he found a way—costly though it was—to save mankind by serving up his very own Son. Hallmark, it would seem, overstated the quality of their product. It was, after all, only God who cared enough to send the very best. He sent his one and only Son! It is truly amazing! Unlike my mother, the LORD penned his invitations and prepared his table for the worst possible guests—people like you and me, who only moments ago acknowledged our unworthiness of even being considered for such an occasion. But, then, God is amazing! And there is nothing false in his advertising.

THE ADVERTISED CLAIMS

In our text Wisdom does not stop with the preparation of the banquet. We are also presented with the advertised claims of this most marvelous of feasts. Listen again to our text. **“[Wisdom] has sent out her servants, and she calls**

from the highest point of the city, **“Let all who are simple come to my house!” To those who have no sense she says, “Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed.** (v. 3-5).

Imagine that! Wisdom invites everyone to the feast that she has prepared. But then, we shouldn't be all that surprised. Jesus did tell his disciples to **“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation”** (Mark 16:15). Wisdom does not extend a halfhearted invitation. She announces it from the highest point in the city. The invitation is for the simple-hearted, as well as the intelligent and gifted. It is meant for every sinner, rich and poor, young and old, of every nation and race. Until that invitation reached our own ears and captured our hearts we were just simple people lacking in judgment. Because we lacked the knowledge of this gracious invitation, we had wandered helplessly about. Our lives were long on foolishness and short on wisdom. Our condition was genetically rooted in our ancestors. This was our condition from the moment of conception. And like a magnet in a box of iron filings, we naturally have accumulated a long list of transgressions against God. Our souls were starved and had not even tasted of the food and drink that bring eternal life. All of that changed with the call of the gospel—God's gracious invitation to dine with him.

Wisdom's advertising claims, aimed to claim us. Wisdom's advertising seeks to inform us, so that we can see and avoid the traps that the world's folly has set out for ensnaring people. Spiritually, there are only two choices on the menu at this banquet. It's God's wisdom or man's folly. And we know what man's folly serves. Broken homes and shattered lives. Poverty and abuse! Sexual revolution and sexually transmitted diseases! The ruinous love of money and the loss of contentment!

Folly's advertising is all lies and half-truths. Wisdom's claims alone are truth in advertising. God's wisdom is spelled out in his Ten Commandments and his gospel. The one wisely and correctly condemns us for our sins; the other leads us by the hand of Wisdom to the Savior of sinners. Wisdom claims to bring real freedom and real happiness to real people, and she really does. Like an unshakable rock, God's wisdom is the real thing! From it he brings forth in us works that are pleasing to him.

THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Truth in Wisdom's advertising is proven by the customer satisfaction. Our text concludes with these words, **“Leave your simple ways and you will live; walk in the way of insight”** (v. 6). There is a lot of separation in the word “leave”—the separation that we know as repentance. It's that 180° turn around in our lives. It's a change in our hearts that leads to a change in our thinking, our speaking, and the way we behave. It changes our goals from the foolish pursuit of all that perishes to wisely clinging to God's unfulfilling promises. Wisdom urges us to leave the way we once walked, so that guided by God's Word, we walk in the way of the LORD. With every step in that direction, we grow in our understanding of the truth in God's advertising. Wisdom commands us to keep our eyes on the heavenly banquet and to consume what is set before us on her table in God's Word.

Wisdom promises customer satisfaction and she spells out that satisfaction in the word **“live”**. It addresses not only the value of the time we have remaining here, but especially the eternity awaiting us in the hereafter. Now, on this side of heaven, we are to walk in the way of understanding. We know exactly who we are, how we have been invited, what the invitation means for us and for everyone else. Finally in Christ, we know and appreciate the cost of the meal God prepared for us. Wisdom grants us this understanding by means of God's Word. Jesus really died that we might eat of his supper and live! That's forever and that's the truth! Wisdom's invitation has made us wise for salvation in Christ!

Years ago, a *Calvin & Hobbes* cartoon portrayed its hero—an imaginative and mischievous little boy—filling a water balloon. He says, “In order to determine if there is any universal moral law beyond human invention, I have devised the following test: Unless I receive some sign within the next thirty seconds that I shouldn't do it, I will hit Suzie Derkins with this water balloon.” At that point he stops and waits for the sign, which, both we, and he, know will never come. Finally he shouts, “That's it! That proves that there is no universal law.” What happens next is predictable: Calvin hits Suzie with the water balloon. She chases him across two frames and beats him to a pulp, at which point he says, “Why does the universe always give you a sign after you do it?”

God who governs the universe has not waited to give us a sign till after the deed is done. God has advertised in truth. His plan of salvation was written in eternity before he created the universe and is just as he describes it. Its claims are all true. And those who have tasted of the promise of the feast are fully satisfied. His sweet message is new every day.

While the world is focused in on such trivial advertising questions as, “What's in your wallet?” we can look at the Cross and announce to the world the wisdom God has poured into our hearts. It answers the question, “Who can save us?” by giving not only a sign, but his Son, our Savior. Customer satisfaction doesn't get any better than that. Amen.