

The Wisdom of Life's If's & Then's

For whoever finds me (wisdom) finds life and obtains favor from the Lord. ([Proverbs 8:35](#), ESV, parenthesis added)

Life is all about choices – then living with the rewards or consequences of those choices. The law of sowing and reaping will always be true.

It's inescapable – life is all about “if” and “then” scenarios. *If* we touch a hot stove, *then* we'll get burned. *If* we study for an exam, *then* we'll perform better on the test. The same reality applies to sinful choices. There is always a “then” or “until” with sin ([Proverbs 7:21-23](#)). It may be initially appealing, exciting, and pleasurable, but usually sin will take us further than we wanted to go, keep us longer than we intended to stay, and cost us far more than we intended to pay. This quote, from an unknown author, is what I've often heard – and can personally confirm.

The “IF” and “THEN” of Choices

Proverbs 7 and 8 outline the contrasting outcomes of a foolish, sinful choice and a wise, godly choice. Chapter 7 describes a young man who “lacked judgment” and was headed in the wrong direction. He was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and connected with an immoral person with wrong intentions. Presumably, he encountered a much different conclusion than he initially envisioned. His [foolish and sinful choice](#), though initially fun and pleasurable, eventually cost him his life (v. 23).

But, thank God for [Chapter 8](#)! It reveals the call of godly wisdom and the related benefits to those who heed her call. “To you, O men, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind. You who are simple, gain prudence; you who are foolish, gain

understanding” (vs. 4-5). Wisdom’s instruction is incomparable (v.11). Her ways are righteousness and justice (v. 20). To have this wisdom is to have prudence, knowledge, discretion, and sound judgment (vs. 12, 14). Truly blessed is the person who heeds her call (v. 34). But, best of all, living a life of consistent godly wisdom is to obtain favor from God (v. 35).

Where can we find this wisdom? How can we attain it? It begins with the fear of the Lord ([Proverbs 1:7](#)) – approaching Him with reverence, sincerity, and obedience. It requires accepting Him as Savior and Lord, then living a life that is pleasing to Him ([Romans 12:1](#)). Wisdom isn’t acquired haphazardly – it requires a complete effort, full attention, and an intense, lifelong pursuit ([Proverbs 2:1-5](#)). It involves acknowledging God and following His direction in all plans, decisions, and choices ([Proverbs 3:5-6](#)).

When you choose your “ifs” wisely, you’ll not regret your “thens.”

Discussion Questions

1. Looking back on your life, what two or three foolish choices do you regret making?
2. How could those outcomes have been different if you made wise and godly choices?
3. How have those decisions positively influenced the choices you make today?