

Lady Wisdom & Dame Folly at the Intersection of Our Sexuality
by Ken Wilson August 12-13 2006

Proverbs features two main figures: Lady Wisdom and her nemesis, Dame Folly. Wisdom is primary; Dame Folly is just a parody.

First, Lady Wisdom: Proverbs 9: 1-5

- + she builds her house
- + sets out a sensory-rich feast

An inviter-evangelist: Proverbs 1: 20-23

Effect: alluring; "Come eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed!"

Hot on her heels (and ours), Dame Folly: Proverbs 9: 13-18.

- + a seduction scene
- + outside her home, like temple prostitutes in cult of Ashtoreth
- + "on the heights" where Solomon set up pagan altars for his many wives

Dame Folly's M.O. Proverbs 7: 7-23

- + always a seductive come-on that leads to an unanticipated ruin

Wisdom and Folly have only one thing in common. Both appeal to something integral to every human being: their sexuality.

- + Main theme of Genesis, chapter one: creation sustained through sexual reproduction
- + the farther we get from the land (farming, livestock, etc) the more we lose our frame of reference for sexuality
- + sexuality is the river running through God's creation

Of course spirituality involves our sexuality! Of course, God, through Divine Wisdom, makes an appeal to our full humanity, including our sexuality.

How we get the emphasis on the wrong syllable when it comes to God and sexuality:

- + our assumption about God's primary interest in our sexuality
- + a better assumption about moral boundaries & sexuality:
fire = sexuality; fireplace = moral boundaries
- + the point of a fireplace is not the fireplace itself but the fire
- + our faulty imagination concerning the appeal of God and the appeal of His adversary: Satan fuels our gas guzzling Hummer (our sexuality) while God fuels our little scooter (our moral sense)

Wisdom's better way: God, through Wisdom, wishes to attract us....

A broader understanding of sexuality: sexuality is about our capacity to be drawn beyond ourselves toward an "other."

The ultimate union is not man-woman, but the human-divine communion.

Our sexuality is more than a bodily function: more than the reproductive part of the human machine. More subtle and integrated and pervasive than that and closer to the center of who we are: filled with yearnings and desires for a more perfect union.

Of a piece with or signified by our sexuality:

- + our beauty response
- + our music response
- + our engagement with the arts
- + our "being drawn" to interest, hobbies, calls, vocations.
- + even when we are drawn inward, it is to something beyond ourselves.

Our sexuality in is a landing pad for the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit hovers over us there as the Spirit hovers over the waters... and draws us toward Wisdom, toward Jesus, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom, toward God himself.

But be sure of this: Lady Wisdom is competing for our affections with Dame Folly. We are pursued by both, but we cannot pursue both simultaneously: to seek after the one is to abandon the other....and the one leads to life and bliss and unimaginable joy, and the other to the most sorrowful, inane, regrettable emptiness.

Conclusion: Wisdom, in our religion-on-demand culture, is something we turn to when we need to know pronto which way to go. But Wisdom is not a consumer item. Wisdom is crying aloud in the streets for us, delighting in God and the children of men, yearning for a lifelong embrace.

She's a lady and she wants to be embraced for who she is!
And what She wants is what He wants....

Jesus calls aloud in the streets: God-looking-forward to union, communion with you...

Our response...

For Further Study:

Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom by Ben Witherington III

