

Rewards or Loss? 1 Cor 3:12-15; Restak on True Potential; Spiritual Growth Requires Interest & Effort; Proverbs 8: Outline; Wisdom's Call, v. 1

- 13) Those that make the advance will be proved worthy at the evaluation tribunal of Christ for it is there that believers will be held responsible for their production, whether from the source of the Holy Spirit or from the source of the flesh:

1 Corinthians 3:12 - Now if anyone keeps on building upon this foundation [**Jesus Christ**]—gold, silver, precious stones; wood, hay, straw—

v. 13 - every man's production shall become obvious; for the day [**the tribunal**] shall declare it because it shall be revealed in the fire; and the fire shall test every man's work for what quality it is.

v. 14 - If any man's work survives, he will receive a reward.

v. 15 - If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss of reward, but he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- 14) Rewards at the evaluation tribunal are conveyed in response to the believer's application from wisdom in the *kardia*.
- 15) This is the result of a process whereby the Holy Spirit's instruction provides academic understanding of God's Word; the believer's positive volition allows the Spirit to convert the information to *epignōsis* understanding in the *kardia*, and, through spiritual growth, it becomes wisdom for accurate application of doctrine to the circumstances of life.
- 16) Thus the believer has an ace in the hole—the Holy Spirit—who gives him an advantage toward the acquisition of wisdom that the unbeliever does not. There is nothing that prevents any believer from making the advance to spiritual maturity.
- 17) Before addressing Proverbs 8, here is another excerpt from Richard Restak amplifying the fact that wisdom, expertise, and professionalism are attainable by anyone having an *interest* in a given subject:

What Is a Person's True Potential? If genius is entirely genetic, then pessimism about achieving eminence would seem to be justified: if genes are so important, most people are likely to remain permanently mired in mediocrity. If, on the other hand, individual effort can lead to enhancement of the brain's structure and function, resulting in the formation of the prodigious long-term memories required of superior performance, then all of us may be capable—if not of genius—of at least achieving levels of performance that will separate us from the vast majority of our competitors. (pp. 16-17)

I put this question of inheritance versus development to Anders Ericsson, a psychologist from Florida State University in Tallahassee who has spent the past 20 years studying geniuses, prodigies, and other superior performers in fields as diverse as sports, the arts, and entertainment.

Ericsson is firmly convinced that there are no special inherited qualities that distinguish persons with expert abilities. The key ingredient turns out to be the willingness to “stretch yourself to the limit and increase your control over your performance,” he says. He points to a study he carried out at the highly regarded Music Academy of West Berlin. “Superior” students, judged by their teachers as most likely to go on to concert careers, put in an average of 24 practice hours per week. “Good” students, thought more likely to end up as teachers than performers, practiced an average of only 9 hours a week. By the age of 20, the probable teachers had put in an estimated 4,000 hours of practice, while the future performers had wracked up an estimated 10,000 hours.

Ericsson found a similar pattern of intense solitary, deliberate practice among superior performing athletes, chess players, and mathematicians.

He concludes, “For the superior performer the goal isn’t just repeating the same thing again and again but achieving higher levels of control over every aspect of their performance. That’s why they don’t find practice boring. Each practice session they are working on doing something better than they did the last time. (p. 17)

In order to achieve superior performance in a chosen field, the expert must counteract the natural impulse to gain an automated performance as soon as possible. (p. 18)

“Individuals who perform at higher levels utilize specific kinds of memory processes,” according to Ericsson. “They have acquired refined mental representations to maintain access to relevant information and support more extensive flexible reasoning about encountered tasks or situations. Better performers are able to rapidly encode, store, and manipulate information. None of these adjustments would be possible if expert performance were fully automated.”¹ (p. 19)

71. This is a neuroscientific way of describing the process of inculcation for application based on wisdom from acquired truth rather than performance based on behavior modification.
72. The structure of Proverbs 8 provides the outline for the chapter that emphasizes the superiority of wisdom. It has seven stanzas made up of five verses each. Each stanza is made up of three-verse sextuplets (six lines) and two-verse quatrains (four lines).

Outline: Proverbs 8

Stanza 1:	Introduction:
	Sextuplet 1 8:1-3
	Quatrain 1: 8:4-5
Stanza 2:	Exhortation to the Audience:
	Sextuplet 2: 8:6-8
	Quatrain 2: 8:9-10
Stanza 3:	Wisdom and Establishment:

¹ Richard Restak, *The New Brain: How the Modern Age Is Rewiring Your Mind*, (Emmaus, PA: Rodale, 2003), 16-19.

Sextuplet 3: 8:12-14²

Quatrain 3: 8:15-16

Stanza 4: Wisdom's Rewards:

Sextuplet 4: 8:17-19

Quatrain 4: 8:20-21

Stanza 5: Wisdom Precedes and Delights in the Creation:

Quatrain 5: 8:22-23

Sextuplet 5: 8:24-26

Stanza 6: Wisdom and the Natural Order:

Sextuplet 6: 8:27-28

Quatrain 6: 8:29-31

Stanza 7: Conclusion: Invitation and Warning:

Sextuplet 7: 8:32-34

Quatrain: 7 8:35-36

Introduction: Stanza 1: Sextuplet 1: vv. 1-3

Verse 1: The Rhetorical Question:

Proverbs 8:1 - Does not Wisdom call, and understanding lift up her voice? (NASB)

(See visual: **Inculcation for Application.**)

1. The proverb opens with a rhetorical question that calls attention to the availability of wisdom. The word is חֹכְמָה *chochmah* and we have defined it as: "The acquired asset of the believer that enables him to apply doctrine accurately to life and circumstances."
2. The proverb begins by personifying the invisible asset of wisdom which will begin speaking in verse 4.
3. The word "call" is actually a summons to come and hear what Wisdom has to say. Wisdom is "understanding" applied to circumstances. Here the word for understanding is תְּבוּנָה *tebunah* (a derivative of בִּינָה *bin*) and actually refers to discernment which is one of the distinguishing characteristics of wisdom.
4. True wisdom is the application of *epignōsis* knowledge of the Word of God. To do this one must, on many occasions, have the doctrinal discernment to know not only *what* to apply but also *how* and *when* to apply.
5. The principle that is being taught by the rhetorical question is that Wisdom is available to anyone who is willing to place an *interest* in her instruction.
6. The Bible is, in reality, God's summons to every person, and to believers in particular, to respond to the teaching of His Word so that they might acquire the wisdom it provides.

² "The structure of the poem suggests that v. 11 ... is a gloss interpolated from 3:15" (Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1-15* [Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004], 388).

Proverbs 8:1 - Does not Wisdom summon loudly? Does not discernment raise her voice? (CTL)