



Proverbs 1:20-30

(20) Wisdom calls aloud in the street,
she raises her voice in the public squares; (21) at the head of the noisy
streets she cries out,
in the gateways of the city she makes her speech: (22) "How long will
you simple ones love your simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in mockery
and fools hate knowledge? (23) If you had responded to my rebuke,
I would have poured out my heart to you
and made my thoughts known to you. (24) But since you rejected me
when I called
and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, (25) since you
ignored all my advice
and would not accept my rebuke, (26) I in turn will laugh at your
disaster;
I will mock when calamity overtakes you- (27) when calamity overtakes
you like a storm,
when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,
when distress and trouble overwhelm you. (28) "Then they will call to me
but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me. (29) Since they hated
knowledge
and did not choose to fear the LORD, (30) since they would not accept
my advice
and spurned my rebuke,

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Fearing [God](#) is a choice. Each and every day of our lives, we are faced with many pressures, forces, and influences that compel us to react. We must

make a choice: "Shall I go this way, or shall I go that way?" One way represents the fear of God; the other way represents the fear of men, the fear of the loss of pleasure, the fear of the loss of some other physical, social, or cultural "need" that we do not want to lose.

Notice the verbs in this series of verses: "hated," "did not choose," "would have none," "despised"! Is it any wonder that [Romans 8:7](#) says that the carnal mind is enmity against God? We begin to understand that it was the fear of God, given as the gift of God, that drove us to react, drove us in the direction of the very One who holds in His hands the issues of life! God instilled that reaction within us!

There is an antagonism toward wisdom—toward God. Wisdom is not hiding. People have access to common wisdom, which is described as being right out there on the street—out in public. It is in the forest; it is in the city; it is on the job—it is everywhere! We are surrounded by it! This is why God can make the accusation that the Gentiles who do not have the law are a law unto themselves when they do what the law says is right ([Romans 2:14](#)). Their own conscience bears them witness that they *understand* what is right and what is wrong (verse 15)!

Proverbs 1 shows that God (personified as Wisdom) uses just about every device imaginable to awaken people to what is right, so that they will fear evil. We see Wisdom threatening, laughing, and warning, like a dog baring its teeth. If a snarling pit bull braced to attack every time we were about to [sin](#), we would fear, would we not? Our skin would crawl, our hair would stand on end, and we would be almost spitless!

God has not chosen to warn us in that way, but He does warn us through His Word. He also warns us through the fruit of sin, which we see in [this world](#) as well as in our own lives. It is almost as if Wisdom is saying, "I told you so, but you would not listen!"

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:
[The Fear of God](#)



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