

# Then They Shall Call on Me...

*Proverbs 1:28*

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*“Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.”*

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Verses 20-27 lays out what can be called for us “*The Call of Wisdom*”. Extending through v33, Wisdom is personified and speaks in the first person, emphasizing the serious consequences that come to those who reject it. Similar personifications of wisdom occur in 3:14–18; 8:1–36; 9:1–12. Seen as a total passage - wisdom is seen as a prophetess and teacher. She shows the folly of those who reject moral instruction and discipline.

Once Solomon reaches verse 28 we see God’s rejection of sinners carefully detailed. This is the aspect of God’s wrath expressed in His abandonment of sinners. Paul discusses this in Rom. 1:24–28. No prayers or diligent seeking will help them (cf. 8:17). While this is an awful concept, it is one that needs be preached and witnessed when the opportunity is given with the unredeemed. Sadly, it is all too often put forth that because of God’s love, he is never willing to “close the door”, despite their continual resistance, rejection, rebellion and persistent rebellion against Him. The truth of the matter is often that if a person has not sought wisdom before calamity strikes, it is often too late to learn. Whereas for the unredeemed this is disastrous; but for the redeemed, it results in the chastening hand of God, even severely administered, but no final casting aside and out. Those who are God’s children, purchased by the blood Jesus, there is security and safety, even from self!

The “*Then*” at the beginning of verse 28 calls for a conclusion drawn from the truths proclaimed in the prior section. The point there was that Wisdom has called and called, counselling a turn from wickedness and a submission to God. It is almost as if Solomon is saying “You had many, many chances to straighten this manner out. I called and called, but you resisted and refused.

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*27 When your terror comes like a storm,  
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,  
When distress and anguish come upon you.*

*28 “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;  
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.  
(Proverbs 1:27–28)*

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We need to understand the conclusion stated in verse 28 to be as a result of what was said before verse 27. Solomon lays out that conclusion as a result of what was laid out pretty much through the entire chapter before. As a result of what he has said, when real disaster comes, God will turn a deaf ear and virtually hide from them as they cry out.

The frightening part is that Solomon says that even though the “call on God” He will not hear. The word “call” speaks off doing what is necessary to be sure that you are heard, no matter what the contrary circumstance. It can be loud voice, physical motions, etc. It can speak of shouting, naming, appointing another to act as go-between, proclaiming, reciting, reading, or pretty much anything that might fulfill the need to get attention.

The word answer lays out for us the severity of just what happens on God’s part. ‘Answer’ can not only mean reply or answer; but also to give evidence, to testify, even to follow willingly. It is speaking of the sad fact that, despite the desperate cry of those in view, God will give no indication that He has even heard their cry, let alone that there is any evidence or indication that the ones crying out to Him are His or entitled to an answer.

The last phrase underscores the idea here and emphasizes the gravity and seriousness of what is being said. We remember that Solomon understood the wonderful connection that exists between God and His children. But in spite of this spiritual joining, the ones in view will not be able to “find” Him due to the fact that will see to it that He is not able to be found. “Find” means to meet, to achieve, to run into (even accidentally), even to achieve. Interestingly, this is another of those places where the form of the word (the imperfect) indicates that the action is happening at the time it is being spoken, it had its’ origin at some time in the past. The inability to find the Lord is NOT because they’re looking hard enough or in the right places. Rather, it is because of the causal action in the past that has already been described (in the prior verses).

To summarize our interpretation - “Then,” not till after they have been called and sought with loving solicitude. To seek “early” is to seek diligently. Thus God reproaches His people with His “*rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not*” (Jer. 7:13). The reproach will be turned into a ground of condemnation if not heeded. The retribution will be that they shall seek Him early, but shall not find Him.

There are number of Biblical illustrations we can suggest:

- Esau, who had despised his birthright blessing, sought it vainly at last with tears.
- The Israelites, who would not hear when God spoke unto them, but went against the Amorites, in vain wept before the Lord afterwards (Deut. 1:43–45).
- Too late did the foolish virgins knock for admission at the door they might have entered had they been in time.

By way of application we can see that wisdom reiterates her invitations. But if the sinner refuse, or make excuse, or procrastinate, then, at last, judgment utters her voice. The call was tender and winning; the sentence is severe and repellant.

But who can complain of injustice? For had the truants but answered the Voice, they would have seen a Hand outstretched to beckon, to welcome them back. Yea, the very Hands that were stretched upon the cross would have been laid upon their heads in blessing. But alas! “no man regarded.” And then, when

warned, by sickness or death before their eyes, by hairbreadth escapes, by many a thrilling fear, “*they set at nought all His counsel.*” And when to this, in love, He added the thunder of the law, the sharp remonstrance of conscience, and the touching revelation of His cross, “they would none of His reproof.”

So, at last, the terrible retribution is denounced.

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*“Because I have called, and ye refused: therefore shall ye call upon Me, but I will not answer. Because I have stretched out My hand, but no man regarded: therefore shall ye seek Me eagerly (with outstretched, suppliant hands), but ye shall not find Me. Because ye have set at nought My counsel, I also will laugh at your calamity. Because ye would none of My reproof, I will mock when your fear cometh.”*

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Great God! is this true? Is this Thy Word? And am I yet spared? And does the Voice of Wisdom yet invite me? Oh, give me grace to heed, to obey that Voice! It calls me back to God, to my home in His Church, to a son’s place at His table, to walk henceforth in His ways. If I have not already, I must, I will return. For how self-condemned I shall be, if, at the last, I find Him deaf to my entreaties, and learn too late that in rejecting Him I ensured my own rejection!