

Abide in Me

John 15:4
*Bible studies for disciples
who make disciples*



Volume 8 - Number 13

The Week of January 22, 2023

Get Wisdom
Fool-Proofing Your Life
Selected Texts in Proverbs

This week we'll reference a selection of passages from Proverbs, each dealing with the central issue of the wise and the foolish. Solomon implores us all throughout the book of Proverbs to seek wisdom and to "fool-proof" our lives. The passages we will look at this week serve as both an inspiration to pursue wisdom and a warning about the dangers of acting as a fool. Let's examine a few of these passages.

As you read each selected passage:

- Underline each instance of a fool suffering the consequences of their actions.
- Circle each reference to the rewards in life for the wise.

READ PROVERBS 1:22, 32, 33

²² "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?
How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing
and fools hate knowledge?
³² For the simple are killed by their turning away,
and the complacency of fools destroys them;
³³ but whoever listens to me will dwell secure
and will be at ease, without dread of disaster."

1. Those referred to here as "simple ones" are synonymous with fools. In the preceding verses, Wisdom is calling out to anyone who will listen to Her. Her question in verse 22 is "how long will you love being simple?". Why would anyone enjoy being foolish and hate knowledge as this verse describes?
2. Verse 32 speaks to the end result of this sustained life behavior; they are killed and destroyed by their foolishness. What compels some to turn away from Wisdom's calling out to live differently? What is meant by the term "complacency of fools"?
3. What is the quality or qualities of Wisdom that make it possible to dwell securely and be at ease just by listening to Her? As we think of Wisdom being used here as a personification of Christ, allow that to guide your answers.

READ PROVERBS 8:27-32

²⁷ When he established the heavens, I was there;
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
²⁸ when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
²⁹ when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
³⁰ then I was beside him, like a master workman,
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the children of man.
³² “And now, O sons, listen to me:
blessed are those who keep my ways.

4. These verses give a description of who Wisdom is personifying: Jesus Christ. These verses provide for us the basis of belief in the authority of Wisdom here in Proverbs. Verse 32 concludes this though by reaching forward in time to Christ’s teachings and keeping the words of the gospel message. What are 1--2 of the teachings (ways) of Christ that have deeply impacted your life?

READ PROVERBS 14:15, 15:5 & 16:25

¹⁵ The simple believes everything,
but the prudent gives thought to his steps.
⁵ A fool despises his father's instruction,
but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.
²⁵ There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.

5. These three verses provide us with insights into the value system of a foolish person as outlined in the Proverbs. Proverbs 14:15 speaks to what we might call being gullible by believing everything. In our current culture, what social forces actually foster being gullible? How can we guard against this foolish trait?

6. The foolish person in Proverbs 14:15 is contrasted by the prudent being thoughtful in his/her steps. If we look at Proverbs 3:5,6 as a foundation point here, what can we do to be more like the prudent person in this verse?

7. Proverbs 15:5 delves into how a fool will cast off his father’s instruction (discipline and correction are also used in other translations). What are some of the best “words of wisdom” you’ve received from your father or a helpful father figure? How have you grown from someone’s instruction/discipline/correction in your own life?

8. Finally in Proverbs 16:25 we encounter a verse that speaks to the wisdom of man apart from God’s guidance; and its inevitable end. What are specific ways in our lives that we can move beyond our own pride and move beyond the limitations of the “wisdom of man”? What needs to be our focus if we are to move beyond our own pride?

READ PROVERBS 18:1-8

- ¹ Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire;
he breaks out against all sound judgment.
- ² A fool takes no pleasure in understanding,
but only in expressing his opinion.
- ³ When wickedness comes, contempt comes also,
and with dishonor comes disgrace.
- ⁴ The words of a man's mouth are deep waters;
the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.
- ⁵ It is not good to be partial to the wicked
or to deprive the righteous of justice.
- ⁶ A fool's lips walk into a fight,
and his mouth invites a beating.
- ⁷ A fool's mouth is his ruin,
and his lips are a snare to his soul.
- ⁸ The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels;
they go down into the inner parts of the body.

9. Verses 1-3 track the devolving nature of what happens when a fool chooses to follow his/her own way instead of the way of Wisdom, ultimately culminating in disgrace. Call out each of these destructive words and see how it consumes a person. What clues do you see in just these three verses as to how we can “fool-proof” ourselves in preventing these things from ever describing us?

10. Verses 4-8 speak to the destructive power of the tongue and the implications of how any of us can become foolish by not having a reign over the power of our words. How have you seen words destroy others and what safeguards can we implement to reign in the power of a destructive tongue?

11. Verse 4 contrasts a man's mouth by talking about deep waters and a bubbling brook. Why is this contrast made and what is Solomon trying to communicate here?

12. Verse 8's use of the word “whisperer” implies in part gossip and the fact that it can go down to the inner parts of the body. Why is this so specific to gossip, and how can we stop gossip dead in its tracks when given these “delicious morsels” from others?

13. Together this collection of verses in Proverbs relating to “fool-proofing” your life are designed to serve as a calling to listen to Wisdom's calling and as a warning against the many snares of being foolish. For further study, read Matthew 7:24-27 and study Jesus' teaching on this topic. Let us all seek to build the foundation of our lives upon the rock of Jesus.

Pray: Lord we seek wisdom in life; YOUR wisdom that you have provided us through so many means. Thank you for the Word of God speaking to us, thank you for the testimony of others meant to give us wise counsel. Thank you for your church to strengthen our faith and keep us set apart, not falling into the pitfalls of the foolish people outlined in scripture. As we grow in wisdom, please use us to speak into the lives of others. Amen.

