

Characteristics of a Fool

12 January 2020 PM – Proverbs 9:13 – Fools – Scott Childs

Introduction: A fool is someone who rejects God's Word and lacks reason. Thus, a fool is one who lacks the wisdom of God to live his life. Proverbs 22:15 tells us that we were all born fools. However, God does not want any of us to remain fools. One of the primary duties of every parent is to teach his foolish children how to obtain God's wisdom. Throughout life, we must constantly be seeking God's wisdom to overcome our sinful tendencies toward foolishness.

In order for us to recognise foolishness in our lives so that we can seek to replace it with God's wisdom, we must be able to identify the characteristics of a fool that God reveals in the book of Proverbs.

Transition: This evening we are going to look at 13 characteristics of a fool that we ought to help us identify foolishness in our own lives.

1. Fools are Clamorous

- a. (Proverbs 9:13) "*A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing.*"
- b. Here the fool is a woman who is clamorous (i.e., to roar, speak loudly, to growl, to rage), she is simple (i.e., naïveté) and ignorant.
- c. Such traits are not found among the wise.

2. Fools Laugh at Sin

- a. (Proverbs 10:23) "*It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom.*"
- b. The word "*sport*" describes laughing, mocking or being joyful. The word "*mischief*" refers to evil plans. The fool gets his enjoyment by fulfilling his evil plans.

3. Fools are Unteachable

- a. (Proverbs 12:15) "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*"
- b. Fools think their way is right and God's way is wrong. They are fully satisfied with their own way of life. ^(Stevenson, p.165) They will not listen to Bible teaching or counsel. A person who thinks his way is better than God's way is a fool.

4. Fools are Shameless

- a. (Proverbs 13:16) "*Every prudent man dealeth with*

that his heart may discover itself."

- b. Fools find no joy in learning God's way of doing things, or even learning from wise counselors or teachers. Learning truth does not appeal to them. They are preoccupied with less important matters. Their delight is in discovering (i.e., uncovering) their heart. In other words, they want to air their personal opinions, which are all-important to him.

13. Fools are Burdensome

- a. (Proverbs 27:3) "*A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.*"
- b. When a fool gets angry, and he often does, his anger is almost unbearable. It weighs very heavy on the hearts of family, loved ones, and friends. It is a crushing load on all who must endure its explosion.

Conclusion: Not every one of these characteristics describe every fool, but they are typical characteristics of those who are fools. **Review** the list again.

Are any of these characteristics are present in your life? The wise person will take a close look to see. Since we often think the best of ourselves, get the opinion of a trusted friend. If you are married, ask your spouse to evaluate your life and give you a report.

If you find any characteristics of a fool in your life, seek to replace it with God's wisdom. We can only get wisdom from God. (Proverbs 2:6) "*For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.*" God's first requirement for wisdom is found in Proverbs 9:10, "*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.*" To replace our foolishness with wisdom, we must humbly fear God and seek His wisdom from the Scriptures.

Song: Cleanse Me - 166

knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly."

- b. The phrase "*layeth open*" describes something that is split apart. The fool splits opens his foolish heart and exposes it for everyone to see. He openly displays his folly.

5. Fools are Addicted to Evil

- a. (Proverbs 13:19) "*The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: but it is abomination to fools to depart from evil.*"
- b. The thought of separating from their evil ways is sickening to a fool. He is addicted to doing things his own way. He does not want to live God's way. "The fool exposes his lack of knowledge to all by his evident lack of discernment." (KJV Commentary, p.703)

6. Fools are Self-Deceived

- a. (Proverbs 14:8) "*The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit.*"
- b. The foolishness of his way of life has deceived him. He thinks his way is right though he is opposing God. Also, he demonstrates his foolishness by attempting to deceive others in order to gain selfish advantage.

7. Fools Remain Fools

- a. (Proverbs 14:24) "*The crown of the wise is their riches: but the foolishness of fools is folly.*"
- b. While riches (material, character or spiritual) form a crown worn by the wise, fools are known only by their foolishness. They do nothing worthwhile resembling a crown. Steveson adds, "Whereas the wisdom of the wise results in prosperity and a good reputation, the foolishness of the fool simply remains foolishness. He gains nothing by his foolishness." (p.194)

8. Fools Do Not Speak Right Words

- a. (Proverbs 17:7) "*Excellent speech becometh not a fool: much less do lying lips a prince.*"
- b. The word translated "*excellent*" refers to a straight line or a tight straight rope. (AHLB) It is used to describe a rope staked to a tent. Thus, it implies a straight or right speech. Speaking that which is straight or right is foreign to a fool.
 - 1) The word "*fool*" used here is *nabal* in Hebrew. It is only used three times in Proverbs.

- 2) It is the worst kind of fool. He is a hardened sinner, one who steadfastly opposes God's authority. (Steveson, p.231)

9. Fools Reject Correction

- a. (Proverbs 17:10) "*A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.*"
- b. A reproof or verbal rebuke is helpful to those who are wise. They accept the rebuke and seek to make needed changes. That verbal rebuke does more for the wise man that 100 stripes from a cane or whip will do for a fool. Fools are unteachable. They harden themselves against rebuke. They have their minds made up and refuse to change. They will not even listen to God's clear commands. "The 'fool' does not respond to correction, not even to drastic punishment." (Steveson, p.233)

10. Fools are More Dangerous than a Raging Bear

- a. (Proverbs 17:12) "*Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, rather than a fool in his folly.*"
- b. If a bear is robbed of her whelps or cubs, she will become furious and extremely dangerous. It is better to meet such a bear than to encounter a fool engaged in his folly. The bear may take your life, but the fool may take your purity, your reputation, your character, your family, your integrity, your money, your walk with God, and your usefulness for God.
- c. When choosing friends, remember this warning about fools.

11. Fools are Unsatisfied

- a. (Proverbs 17:24) "*Wisdom is before him that hath understanding; but the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.*"
- b. The person with understand focusses on things that will make him wise. On the other hand, the eyes of the fool wander to the ends of the earth looking for something that will satisfy their lusts. It is far better to seek God's wisdom in the Bible than to search the whole earth for something more exciting.
- c. This fool is the person who lives in a dream world and does not focus on the present.

12. Fools Uncover their Hearts

- a. (Proverbs 18:2) "*A fool hath no delight in understanding, but*