

also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and **leave them**, for Ruth.

- 2) Our verse implies that being with the foolish will lead to our own death; therefore, we must forsake him *and live*.
- 3) **ILLUS**: When I was a boy, a neighbour boy named Pat lived about a kilometre away from me. Occasionally, my brother and I would get permission to go play with him. Pat's parents had two big, mean bloodhounds. They kept them tied in the shed. One day when we were playing hide and seek, I forgot about the dogs and went in the shed to hide. Suddenly I heard a growl and I ran out just before one of the dogs sank his teeth in me. I was terrified but very glad that I abandoned that shed as quickly as I had.
- 4) For our safety, whenever possible, we must forsake or abandon foolish people. We must make a clean break from them. They are dangerous and harmful to our character. That may sound harsh, but it is safe and it obeys God's command.

#### **b. Go after the way of understanding**

- 1) God always encourages the principle of replacement. When we give up something bad, replace it with something good. That is what he is teaching us here.
- 2) When we abandon the foolish, we must go the other direction and follow God's understanding, which is discernment.
- 3) If we do not go after the way of understanding, our sinful flesh and carnal nature will gravitate back toward foolishness.

**Conclusion**: God gave us three ways to avoid catching a fool's contagious traits: 1) Associate not with the fool, 2) Avoid the fool, and 3) Abandon the fool. It is better to sever a friendship than to be exposed to a contagious fool. Choose your friends wisely. Separate from friends who are not wise.

**Song**: Be Prudent, Be prudent and watching to see the evil way; Be prudent and watching then wisely turn away. Don't be fooled by Satan, Don't be overtaken, Quickly flee temptation and do what's right today.

# Contagious Fools

26 January 2020 PM – Proverbs 13:20 – Fools – Scott Childs

**Introduction**: A contagious disease is one that spreads from one person to another either by being near the infected person or by being in contact with body fluids of the infected person.

We all know that a bad cold can be contagious as can a stomach flu and gastro. For that reason, we try to stay away from people who are sick with those illnesses. We do not want to catch what they have.

In a similar way, fools are contagious. Their foolish thinking and actions are easily passed on to those who are constantly around them.

**Transition**: I want to show you three verses in the book of Proverbs that tell us how to avoid catching a fool's contagious traits.

*The first way to avoid catching a fool's contagious traits is to ...*

## **1. Associate not with the fool**

(Proverbs 13:20) "*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*"

### **a. Heed God's admonition.**

- 1) If you walk with wise men, you will become wiser.
- 2) If you are a companion of fools, you will be destroyed.
  - a) The word "*companion*" is a farming term that refers to pasturing. When sheep are pasturing, they are grazing for grass with all the other sheep. They follow the leader and roam all over the paddock as a flock. Cows and other grazing animals do the same thing.
  - b) God warns us that if we pasture or graze with a fool, we will unconsciously follow his paths. He will lead us astray without our even knowing it.
  - c) The word translated "*destroyed*" describes a shout in time of battle. It was a shout of alarm when the enemy was attacking. Those who spend time with fools will eventually shout an alarm or cry for being overcome.
- 3) Here is what wisdom will say in the day of the fool's destruction. (Proverbs 1:26-29) "*I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh*

*as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:"*

### **b. Choose wise friends.**

- 1) Friends are very influential. (1 Corinthians 15:33) "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.*"
- 2) Not every person will make you a good friend. Sadly, that is true even of some Christians.
- 3) Spending time with a wise friend, you will gain some of his or her wisdom.
- 4) Fools are contagious, so spending time with a fool you are going to pick up his foolish traits unconsciously that will lead you to destruction or harm.
- 5) A person may have a likeable personality, a friendly smile, a common language, or a sense of humour, but if that person is a fool who does not obey God's Word, he or she will not make you a good friend. It is better to have NO friends than to have a friend who is a fool.
- 6) Jehoshaphat king of Judah became friends with Ahab king of Israel. Here is what God said about his friendship with that fool. (2 Chronicles 19:2) "*And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD.*"

*The second way to avoid catching a fool's contagious traits is to ...*

## **2. Avoid the fool**

(Proverbs 14:7) "*Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.*"

### **a. Be perceptive**

- 1) God wants us to be constantly evaluating those around us. This is not to cast judgment on them. It is to perceive their character.
- 2) One of the reasons we are studying God's words about the fool is so that we can be more discerning.
- 3) **Let me illustrate.** If you visit the USA be sure to run if you

ever meet a skunk. However, if you have no idea what a skunk is you will not be able to obey my warning. A skunk looked similar to a black cat with a small head and a double white stripe from his nose to the tip of his tail. Skunks have a sickening smell and if threatened they will spray you with a substance that will make you vomit. That information helps you understand my warning. The same is true about the fool. You must know how he thinks, talks, and acts so you can identify him and avoid him.

- 4) If you perceive that a person speaks with a lack of God's knowledge (e.g., he lies, slanders, says foolish things, seeks to argue, or always speaks his mind), that should be a flashing warning light that he or she is a fool.

### **b. Be evasive**

- 1) God tells us that we must *go from the presence* of such a person. Be evasive. Avoid him or her.
- 2) If that person has lips that lack God's wise knowledge, he or she will not make you a good friend. It is a danger to be around that person.
- 3) Sometimes we simply cannot run from the fool completely. The fool might be a family member, a classmate, a workmate, or a neighbour. Though you may not be able to avoid that person totally, you can choose not to make them a friend.

*The third way to avoid catching a fool's contagious traits is to ...*

## **3. Abandon the fool**

(Proverbs 9:6) "*Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.*"

### **a. Go away from the foolish**

- 1) The word "*forsake*" includes the idea of departing, leaving behind, abandoning, neglecting, or letting go. It says that you **were** with him but you left and separated from him.
  - a) It is first used in (Genesis 2:24) "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*"
  - b) In the book of Judges, the people **forsook** the LORD.
  - c) In the book of Ruth, Boas told the reapers to let fall