

Three Kinds of Fools

Introduction; Few folks would like to be called a fool.

A. However most of us act foolishly at some time in our lives.

1. Yet we still do not like to think of ourselves as fools. We recognize that, as folks grows older, they should grow wiser and not act foolishly as often.
2. While some do grow wiser as they get older, many just get older. They continue to act as foolish when they are old as when they were young.

B. There are several definitions for a fool in the dictionaries.

1. Dictionaries defines a fool as;
 - a. one who lacks sense; unintelligent or thoughtless;
 - b. a silly or stupid person; one lacking in good judgment;
 - c. a weak minded or idiotic person; a simpleton or dullard; easily fooled or tricked.
2. Some of these definitions have to do with one's mental ability. A fool can be someone with a weak mind or a low IQ.
3. Many times though, folks do not have weak mental ability or low IQs, they just do not use what they have—consider the one talent man.
4. The person who will not learn is a bigger fool than one who can not learn but will not.

C. Our wise men have had many things to say about fools.

1. Living in a fool's paradise is great fun, until the rent comes due.
2. *"The learned fool writes his nonsense in better language than the unlearned, but still 'tis nonsense"* — Benjamin Franklin.
3. *"If a man wants to make a fool of himself he will always find plenty of help"* —unknown.
4. *"You are not a fool just because you have done something foolish—only if the folly of it escapes you"* —Jim Fiebig.
5. **'Nobody's fool'** is someone wise enough not to be easily deceived.
6. **'Make a fool out of someone'** is deceiving or tricking them. It is making someone look ridiculous.

D. Someone who did something foolish was asked, "What kind of fool are you?"

1. He replied, *"How many kinds are there?"* We may think that a fool is a fool. However this is not true. There are different kinds of fools.
2. The Greeks and Hebrews had several words for a fool. While they could sometimes be used interchangeably they had different shades of meaning.
2. We will consider three of these Hebrew words today from the book of Proverbs. They are all different.

E. Today we'll consider, *'Three kinds of fools'*.

I. The first fool is young and inexperienced.

A. He can develop common sense if he chooses to do so.

1. The Hebrew word is 'PETHI' (פֶּתִי). It is found about 14 times in the book and is sometimes translated simple or naive.
2. This fool is immature and simple. He can be easily swayed and needs to develop his thinking abilities and to make wise choices.
3. This person is usually young and acts silly or foolish because of his youth. He can learn **if** he is willing.
4. Unfortunately many older folks are still like this. They have not learned to be wise and discerning. They can still be fooled by the con-artist and wicked person.

B. Let's consider some of the Proverbs that speak of this person.

1. [Prov 1:1-7 \(vs 4\)](#); This man can learn if he listens to someone older and wiser. He can learn how to do well in the world and how to do well before God.
2. [Prov 7:6 ff \(vs 7\)](#); [21 ff](#); This young man follows after a harlot. He is young and follows the pleasures of the flesh and does not think of the consequences.

3. Too many today do not think of the consequences of promiscuity. They do not realize they can become parents out of marriage and before they are ready. They do not think of venereal disease or AIDS.
4. They do not think of the character they are developing and they do not think of judgment. **Going for the gusto** or **living life to the fullest** is the goal of many. This usually involves immorality and foolishness. In the end however it is not as pleasant as it seems.
5. **Prov 9:1-6 (vs 4 & 6)**; Wisdom calls to all men and women. Wisdom sets a fine feast and blesses all that dine with her. The simple must decide to turn from foolishness to follow wisdom.
6. This means we do not follow the world's philosophy, **'If it feels good, do it.'** This means we look before we leap and think things through first —measure twice, cut once for example.
4. *Prov 14:15 The simple believes every word, but the prudent man considers well his steps.*
5. *Prov 19:25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple will become wary; reprove one who has understanding, and he will discern knowledge.*

C. An example of this might be the young prophet of 1 Kings 13.

1. He knew the will of God and that he should not eat nor drink in the land of Israel. Yet he listened to the lie of the older prophet and did so and suffered for it. He did that which was wrong in all good conscience. This did not make it right.
2. Many today listen to the lies of con-artists and suffer for it as well. They follow wild schemes and buy things they should know better than to buy. They do not read the fine print and do not believe if something sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't.
3. Many in religion today follow religious leaders and churches in all good conscience. Yet they do not **search the scriptures daily** (Acts 17:11) to see if what is said is true. They are **following the blind and will fall in the ditch** with them —Matt 15:14.

D. Lets see the end of this simple one if he continues in his foolishness.

1. *Prov 1:32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;*
2. *Prov 22:3 A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished.*
3. *Prov 27:12 A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself; the simple pass on and are punished.*
4. Instead of suffering for his foolishness a simple person needs to study the law of God. It will make him wise to know what is right. He can change if he wants to.
5. *Psa 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*

E. We should decide when we're young that we'll seek wisdom and not stay foolish.

1. This means we must make sacrifices to prepare for the future, both physically and spiritually. We cannot just follow our lusts.
2. This word is found in the following passages; Prov 1:4, 22, 32, 7:7, 8:5, 9:4, 6, 16, 14:15, 18, 19:25, 21:11, 22:3, 27:12.

II. The second fool will not listen to others.

A. This second Hebrew word used in Proverbs is 'EVIL' (רשע).

1. It describes one who is headstrong and stubborn and trusts in himself. He acts without council and will not listen to wisdom.
2. He trusts in his own wisdom and feels no need nor desire to know God's will. He rejects wisdom to follow his own way. This word is found about 19 times in Proverbs.

B. Lets consider some of the Proverbs.

1. *Prov 1:7 The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*
2. *Prov 10:8 The wise in heart will receive commands, but a prating fool will fall.*
3. *Prov 11:29 He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.*
4. *Prov 12:15-16 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise. A fool's wrath is known at once, but a prudent man covers shame.*
5. *Prov 14:9 Fools mock at sin, but among the upright there is favor.*

6. *Prov 15:5 A fool despises his father's instruction, but he who receives reproof is prudent.*
7. *Prov 20:3 It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.*
8. *Psa 107:17 Fools, because of their transgression, And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.*

C. An example of this kind of fool is the person who denies there is a God.

1. *Psalm 53:1; The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good.*
2. *Psa 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork,*
3. He has no desire to know God's will and seek His righteousness because His wisdom does not believe in God. He trusts only in himself and what he sees. He is a real fool.
4. The evolutionist, modernist and atheist are like this. They says the world is here by chance and an accident of nature. We came from nothing and return to nothing. Therefore there is no God and no judgment and no right and wrong.
5. Too many people live today without a belief in God and do not seek truth. They see no need to listen to God nor man. They are headstrong and follow their own wisdom in all matters.
6. Others may believe in God but are so headstrong that they believe what they do must be acceptable to God because it is good in their eyes.
7. We must beware of folks like this for they have many followers, even in the church of our Lord. Many are very determined to do things their way because they know they are right.

D. Lets consider the end of this foolish person.

1. *Prov 10:14 Wise people store up knowledge, but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.*
2. *Prov 10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.*
3. *Jer 10:23 O Jehovah, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*
4. *Prov 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

E. We must realize we can't make all the mistakes – we should learn from others.

1. We are not the source of wisdom and knowledge but must learn from God and wise men. All of us can learn if we decide to.
2. This Hebrew word is found in the following passages in Proverbs; 1:7, 7:22, 10:8, 10, 14, 21, 11:29, 12:15-16, 14:3, 9, 15:5, 16:22, 17:28, 20:3, 24:7, 27:3, 22, 29:9.

III. The third fool knows right but he chooses to do wrong.

A. This Hebrew word is KESIL (לְדָסִיךְ).

1. It is found almost 50 times in Proverbs. It describes one who is self-confident and immoral. He knows truth but disregards righteousness and does what is wrong. He is the stupid fool who rejects truth and righteousness.
2. He listens to wisdom, but decides it isn't for him. He is perhaps the greatest fool because he purposely chooses to do evil.
3. He is not the simple one who is tricked by men nor the self-centered and stupid one who will not listen to others. He knows what he is doing.
4. There are many like this in the world. They know what the Lord expects of them, but will not do it.
5. They put off obeying the Lord for the present time or find one excuse after another to not serve God — like Felix in Acts 24:25. This is the greatest fool.

B. Many passages in Proverbs speak of this man. Lets look at a few.

1. *Prov 10:1 The Proverbs of Solomon: A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is the grief of his mother.*
2. *Prov 10:18 Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.*
3. *Prov 10:23 To do evil is like sport to a fool, but a man of understanding has wisdom.*
4. *Prov 13:19-20 A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, but it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil. He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed.*
5. *Prov 14:16 A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident.*

6. *Prov 17:10 Reproof is more effective for a wise man than a hundred blows on a fool.*
7. *Prov 19:1 Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.*
8. *Prov 29:20 Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*

C. An example of this is King Saul of Israel.

1. He calls himself a fool in 1 Samuel 26. He knows the truth. He knows he is in sin and David will be the next king. Yet he continues to fight against God. He wants to change the will of God and kill David. He is a fool because the will of God cannot be thwarted.
2. *1 Sam 26:21 Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."*
3. There are many in the world who know they should become Christians, but will not because they love the world. They are fools.
4. There are many Christians who know they are not as faithful as they should be. They know they should make changes in their life. They know they should be more active in the kingdom of God.
5. But they will not consider making those changes. They are doing what they want to do and will not do more.

D. Lets consider the end of the fool who will not do what he knows is right.

1. *Prov 26:3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the fool's back,*
2. *Prov 18:6-7 A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.*
3. *Prov 1:32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;*

E. Jesus teaches us to be humble, meek, and submissive —Matthew 5:3-10.

1. We should have an interest in spiritual matters and seek to please God and not self. If we know what is right and just refuse to do it, we are stubborn and rebellious. We are a stupid fool and will meet a fool's fate.
2. This word is found in the following passages; Prov 1:22, 32, 3:35, 8:5, 10:1, 18, 23, 12:23, 13:16, 19, 20, 14:7, 8, 16, 24, 33, 15:2, 7, 14, 20, 17:10, 12, 16, 21, 24, 25, 18:2, 6, 7, 19:1, 10, 13, 29, 21:20, 26:1, 3-12 (each verse), 28:26, 29:11, 20.)

Conclusion: Most of us do not want to be considered a fool.

- A. When we consider how the book of Proverbs describes fools many people fall into that category — even many Christians.
- B. We should seek to be wise. True wisdom seeks God.
 1. *Eph 5:15-17 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*
 2. We must study the New Testament and learn the will of the Lord and obey it. We can become wise if we want to.
- C. If we are wise and seek the Lord's will, we will become a Christian according to the NT pattern.
 1. We will **believe** 1) who Jesus is, 2) what Jesus did, and 3) the words of Jesus and 4) obey them. Jesus was the divine Son of God who came to earth as a man and died for our sins.
 2. He was raised from the dead to be our Savior. If we keep His words, He will raise us at the last day — see Mark 16:15, 16, John 3:16, Rom 1:1-4, 16, 6:39-44, etc.
 3. After believing this and deciding to seek God, we must **repent** of our sins and turn to God and His way —see Luke 13:3-5, 24:46-47, Acts 2:38, 17:30, etc.
 4. We must then **confess** or acknowledge, before men, that Jesus is our Lord. We are accepting Him as our Lord and Master —Matt 10:32-33, Acts 8:36-37, Rom 10:9-10, 1 Tim 6:12, 13, etc.
 5. We are then **baptized** to complete our admission into the kingdom of God. It is the act of baptism that washes away our sins when we submit to it with a believing heart. We are immersed into Christ and become a child of God
 6. See the following passages on baptism; Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16: 15-16, Acts 2:38, ;8:12-13, 36-39, 18:8, 22:16, Rom 6:3-7, Gal 3:26-27, etc.

- D. After we become a Christian we must continue to serve the Lord and obey Him in all things.
1. We must be faithful, even to the point of death —Rom 2:10, Matt 10:22.
 2. We must serve the Lord faithfully all of our lives.
- E. If any are here today who wish to serve God and could use the help of the church, please let us assist you.
1. If you want to be baptized to become a Christian, we are ready to assist you.
 2. If you are a Christian who needs the prayers of the saints, we can do this as well.
 3. If any would like to study further privately, please let us assist you in this as well.

An Additional Note...

Jesus said to call no man a fool in Matthew 5. We read there;

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder,' and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire” —vs. 21-22.

Are we wrong in calling some fools who fit the description in Proverbs?

We must consider the context of Matthew 5. Jesus is talking about someone intent on hurting or insulting their brother. They are angry with them (without cause) and insulting them in their anger. This is wrong to do. It is wrong to get angry and just yell insults at someone, regardless of what words we use.

We must recognize that some folks are fools —and that many times we are too. If we do not recognize this, we will not try to help them. We recognize folks by their fruits —Matt 7:15-20. If someone acts like a fool, it is not wrong to state the truth. Perhaps we can help them change their behavior.
—louis