

“What Is a Fool and How Do You Deal With One?”

Dane Ortlund

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I. What Is a Fool

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II. How Do You Deal With One

I. What Is a Fool?

A. Definition

A fool deflects; a wise person listens.

B. 14 texts

Proverbs 10:8

The wise of heart will receive commandments,
but a babbling fool will come to ruin.

Proverbs 10:17

Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life,
but he who rejects reproof leads others astray.

Proverbs 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes,
but a wise man listens to advice.

Proverbs 13:1

A wise son hears his father's instruction,
but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Proverbs 13:13

Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself,
but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

Proverbs 13:18

Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction,
but whoever heeds reproof is honored.

Proverbs 15:5

A fool despises his father's instruction,
but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.

Proverbs 15:12

A scoffer does not like to be reproved;
he will not go to the wise.

Proverbs 15:31

The ear that listens to life-giving reproof

will dwell among the wise.

Proverbs 15:32

Whoever ignores instruction despises himself,
but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.

Proverbs 17:10

A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding
than a hundred blows into a fool.

Proverbs 19:27

Cease to hear instruction, my son,
and you will stray from the words of knowledge.

Proverbs 26:12

Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Proverbs 28:26

Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool,
But he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

So what does this look like practically?

C. 10 Examples

1. A fool doesn't ask questions. Prov 18:2: "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."
2. A fool answers your questions, always promptly, always dogmatically. Prov 15:28: "The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things."
3. Fool can't bring himself to say "I don't know." Prov 15:14: "The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly."
4. A fool does not listen well. Prov 1-9, "Listen, my son...". Prov 19:20: "Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may that you may gain wisdom." Prov 9:13: "The woman Folly is loud; she is full of simpleness and knows nothing."
5. A fool only learns about life through painful first-hand experience, but they are constitutionally unable to receive instruction through the second-hand experience of others. Prov 27:12: "The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it."
6. A fool arrives at a conclusion based on partial information. Prov 18:13: "If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame."
7. A fool's words are depleting, not nourishing. Prov 10:11: "The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life" (also 13:14).
8. A fool makes decisions alone. Prov 11:14: "In an abundance of counselors there is safety."
9. A fool can't consider a rebuke. Prov 17:10: "A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool."

10. A fool must *win*. 29:11: "A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back."
1 Tim 6: "craving for controversy and for quarrels about words..."

D. Three Objections

Objection #1: Aren't we all fools?

Answer: Yes and no.

Objection #2: Are you saying we should take in everything others say to us?

Answer: No.

Proverbs 14:15

The simple believes everything,
but the prudent gives thought to his steps.

Objection #3: What does all this have to do w gospel? Folly/wisdom on one hand, gospel on other.

Answer: Another name for folly = self-justif.

I'm defining folly as deflecting, wisdom as receiving. What's deepest way in which we might deflect or receive? God's invitation to receive his justifying verdict over our lives, sinking down so deeply that, over a lifetime, our need to justify ourselves before others loosens and melts away.

II. How Do You Deal With One

You don't.

Prov 29:9: "If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet."

Prov 17:27: "Whoever restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding."

Prov 26:4-5

[4] Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself.

[5] Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.

Prov 12:16: "The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult."

Prov 13:20: "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm."

Prov 17:14: "The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so quit before the quarrel breaks out."

Prov 19:11: "Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense."

There is a sick *contagion* to folly. It's self-multiplying.

Q&R