



Practical Principles
in the
Book of Proverbs
The Fool

Lesson Objectives:

1. To warn young people away from this path.
2. To show the unsaved fool his character so he will be brought to conviction.
3. To show the believer the foolish side of his nature so that he can repent of it and walk in wisdom.

The Fool

One of the major themes of Proverbs is the fool, beginning in chapter 1 and running through the end of the book. God's objective in describing the fool in such detail and in giving such powerful warnings in regard to folly is three-fold: Proverbs are *principles*, not promises. Sadly, some people do not understand this. As a result, they become angry, even bitter, at God. Nevertheless, *Proverbs are not a guarantee from God*. They are principles that, if followed, are generally true. The outcome stated or implied in a proverb is not true one hundred percent of the time; there are exceptions to every proverb. For example, one of the foremost principles in *Proverbs* is that wise, righteous living results in long life.

Most proverbs contain two lines or statements. A few contain more (for example: 1:27; 27:22; 30:4, 9). These two statements work together to teach one truth. This is called *parallelism*, and it is used throughout the book.

Now note: **The most important key to understanding a proverb is understanding the relationship between the statements.**

While some scholars break down the types of parallelism into further categories, three primary types are used in Proverbs:

Synonymous Parallelism—the two statements express the same or similar thoughts. These statements are often, but certainly not always, joined by *as*, *so*, or *than*

Proverbs 16:18 (NET1) 18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 26:11 (NET1) 11 Like a dog that returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.

Antithetic Parallelism—the two statements express contrasting or opposite thoughts. Generally speaking, these statements are joined by *but*.

Proverbs 28:13 (NET1) 13 The one who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses them and forsakes them will find mercy.

Synthetic Parallelism—the second statement continues or completes the first. These statements are usually joined by *and*.

Proverbs 22:6 (NET1) 6 Train a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will

not turn from it.

Each statement or line in a proverb must be studied and understood in light of the parallel statement. Remember, the two statements work together to teach one truth. One statement may be clearer than the other. As with all Scripture, whatever is obscure is interpreted by that which is clear. The meaning of the less clear line is usually determined by the parallel, clearer line.

The use of synonyms within the proverbs must also be understood. Synonyms are often, but not always, important in the proverbs. For example, the different words used for wisdom and correction express a specific shade of meaning that is significant in that statement. At other times, the different shades of meaning in synonyms are not significant. Solomon often used synonyms solely for the sake of variety and poetic style. Many synonyms are used in the proverbs to describe people: wise, righteous, just, godly...; wicked, perverse, forward, evil, and the like. However, there are only two major groups of people discussed in Proverbs: the wise/righteous, and the foolish/wicked. All the synonyms used describe people in one of these two categories.

The key verse is: **Proverbs 1:7 (NET1) 7** Fearing the LORD is the beginning of moral knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The theme of *Proverbs* is "the fear [trust and reverence] of the Lord." There are **four** main characters in *Proverbs*:

1. The simple individual: this person is naïve, gullible, and prone to fall into traps.
2. The scorner or mocker: this person ridicules, makes light of, and scoffs at God's Word.
3. The fool: this person rejects God and His Word and ignores or refuses correction.
4. The righteous and wise person: this person chooses the path of life and obeys God's Word.

Most conservative scholars agree that Solomon is the primary source of *Proverbs*. In fact, the very first verse attributes the first division of the book to him (1:1-9:18). It also identifies the proverbs of 10:1-22:16 as originating with him. Solomon was noted for using proverbs as a teaching tool when addressing people and when administering the affairs of government.

Proverbs: The Fool
We show ourselves to be fools when WE:

Won't listen
Won't Learn
Won't look ahead

	Lesson	Scripture	Verse
1	The fool see no need for any guidance other than his ow heart	Proverbs 28:26	He who trust in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.
2	The fool is always on the right path - just ask him	Proverbs 12:15	The way of a fool is rights in his own eyes, But he who heeds counsel is wise
3	The fool doesn't bother to <i>UNDERSTAND</i> – he only wants to be <i>UNDERSTOOD</i>	Proverbs 18:2	A fool had no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart.
4	The fool wants everyone to know exactly how he feels	Proverbs 29:11	A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise mane hold them back
5	When a fool gets mad, everybody knows it at once.	Proverbs 12:16	A fool's wrath is known at once, But a prudent man covers shame.
6	When a fool is angry, it's a heavy burden for everybody	Proverbs 27:3	A stone is heavy, and sand is weighty, But a fool's wrath is heavier than both of them.
7	A fool's mouth stirs up strife and keeps him in constant trouble	Proverbs 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
8	A fool may start a quarrel, but he doesn't know how to stop it	Proverbs 20:3	It is honorable for a man to stop striving, Since any fool can start a quarrel.
9	Controversy with a fool is rarely a wise thing to enter into	Proverbs 29:9	If a wise man contends with a foolish man, Whether the fool rages or laughs, there is no peace
10	It takes great wisdom to know how to answer a fool	Proverbs 26: 4,5	Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his won eyes.
11	Getting involved in a fool's folly is a good way to get hurt	Proverbs 17:12	Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, Rather than a fool in his folly.
12	When someone insists on speaking foolishly, the best thing to do is leave	Proverbs 14:7	Go from the presence of a foolish man, When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.
13	A word to the wise is sufficient, but now even punishment will help a fool	Proverbs 17:10; 27:22	Reproof is more effective for a wise man, than a hundred blows on a fool.
14	Because he won't be corrected, the fool will suffer greatly	Proverbs 29:1	He who is often reproved, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy
15	Wise people don't make fools their companions	Proverbs 13:20	He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed
16	Foolishness is what we start with – discipline takes it out of us	Proverbs 22:15	Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, But the rod or correction will drive is far from him.
17	Disregard for God is the main thing that makes a person a fool	Proverbs 1:7	The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Also read - Romans 1:22, Jeremiah 9:23, 24)
18	Where wise people protect themselves, fools just plunge ahead	Proverbs 22:3; 27:12; 11:16	A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself, But the simple pass on and are punished. (also read Matthew 7:24-27)