

The Duties Governing Relationships -Avoiding the Ways of the Fool

Proverbs 26:1-28

Introduction: a successful life revolves around relationships. Family relationships, work relationships, social relationships...these are at the core of a successful life. However, in achieving success, we must always remember that a vertical relationship with God is primary. Knowing and living for God is the beginning of wisdom—the very foundation for developing the skills of discernment that are necessary for success in life *Proverbs 1:7 (NET1) ⁷ Fearing the LORD is the beginning of moral knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.* When people are in a right relationship with God, they are able to have a right relationship with others. The previous chapter (general context) explored relating to rulers, restoring relationships through resolving disputes, and having a wise testimony among others. This chapter explores four types of people who are best avoided whenever possible. However, it is not always possible to steer clear of them; sometimes they must be encountered. Wise people will be prepared for them by understanding their ungodly ways. These proverbs teach those who desire to be wise what to expect from them, and how to deal with them.

To complete the study of this chapter, we will break it down into four pericope as follows:

1. Study the ways of a fool (vv. 1-12).
2. Study the ways of the lazy man (vv. 13-16).
3. Study the ways of the busybody (vv. 17-22).
4. Study the ways of the deceiver (vv. 23-28).

1. (26:1-12) Study the ways of a fool.

a. Note that honor is not _____ for a fool: It is out of place (v. 1). (Pr.19:10).

b. Note undeserved and unfair (foolish) _____: They will not fall on the intended victim (v. 2). (Nu.22:1-6). (Nu.23:8).

c. Note how a fool needs to be controlled and _____ (v. 3). (Ps.32:9). (Pr.10:13). (Pr.19:29).

d. Note how to answer a fool (vv. 4-5).

⇒ Responding to a fool regarding pointless or absurd matters can make you look _____.

⇒ Do not stoop to a fool's level by _____ with him.

⇒ In many matters, fools need no response. Their foolishness _____ for itself.

⇒ _____ a fool is often a waste of time and breath—it accomplishes absolutely nothing. (Pr.23:9).

e. Note that a fool cannot be _____ as a messenger: The sender invites trouble and risks damage (v. 6).

f. Note how useless a _____ is to a fool: He does not understand or apply it (v. 7).

⇒ The image of eating: fools cannot _____ wisdom.

⇒ The image of speaking: fools cannot _____ wisdom.

(1 Co.2:13-14).

g. Note how useless it is to bestow _____ on a fool (v. 8).

h. Note how you must protect yourself from a fool's _____: It can cause pain and damage (v. 9).

i. Note that God will give the fool and the wicked their wages—exactly what they deserve (v. 10). (Ro.2:5-6).

j. Note that a fool does not learn from his disgusting _____: He repeats them (v. 11).

k. Note that a fool has more hope for change than the _____ and _____ (v. 12). (Ro.1:22). (Pr.3:7).

Thought to Remember: We need to study the ways of fools in order to know how to _____ them and be able to deal with them. But we should also study the ways of fools for another, more important reason: we must guard against the foolish ways of this world lest we stumble and fall or become _____ by them. As we conclude this point on the ways of a fool, we need to act wisely. In fact, we need to do the very _____ that a fool does...

- living in a way that is worthy of honor (v. 1)
- ignoring foolish curses pronounced on others, and rejecting superstitions (v. 2)
- being teachable and sensitive to reproof (v. 3)
- discerning when it is profitable to answer a fool (vv. 4-5)
- always being prompt, reliable, and dependable (v. 6)
- knowing how to digest and dispense wisdom (v. 7)
- never bestowing honor on a fool (v. 8)
- ignoring the advice of a fool (v. 9)
- avoiding God's judgment by walking wisely (v. 10)
- learning from our mistakes and failures, not repeating them (v. 11)
- being humble and fully alert to our own sinfulness and shortcomings (v. 12)