

A Study of the Wisdom Literature

(OT Survey Lesson 282—Wisdom & Folly)

Introduction: A great part of the content of Proverbs is devoted to the distinguishing characteristics of the wise as opposed to the foolish. We learn that wisdom is not so much a matter of intellect as attitude toward God and His will. Proverbs makes clear the surpassing value of wisdom in a person's life.

Lesson aim: To know the characteristics of wisdom and folly.

The value of wisdom

24:13-14 My son, eat honey, for it is good, Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste; Know *that* wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find *it*, then there will be a future,
15:24 The path of life *leads* upward for the wise, That he may keep away from Sheol below.
19: 8 He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; He who keeps understanding will find good.
16:25 There is a way *which seems* right to a man, But its end is the way of death.

Acquiring wisdom

14:18 The naive inherit folly, But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
15:14 The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge, But the mouth of fools feeds on folly.
18:15 The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
14:15 The naive believes everything, But the prudent man considers his steps.
17:24 Wisdom is in the presence of the one who has understanding, But the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.
14:6 A scoffer seeks wisdom, and *finds* none, But knowledge is easy to him who has understanding.

The importance of listening to others & accepting correction

18:2 A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.
12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.
15: 22 Without consultation, plans are frustrated, But with many counselors they succeed.
15:31 He whose ear listens to the life-giving reproof will dwell among the wise.
21:11 When the scoffer is punished, the naive becomes wise; But when the wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.
10:17 He is *on* the path of life who heeds instruction, But he who forsakes reproof goes astray.
17:10 A rebuke goes deeper into one who has understanding Than a hundred blows into a fool.
15:12 A scoffer does not love one who reproves him, He will not go to the wise.
29: 9 When a wise man has a controversy with a foolish man, the foolish man either rages or laughs, and there is no rest.
12:1 *WHOEVER* loves discipline loves knowledge, But he who hates reproof is stupid.
15:32 He who neglects discipline despises himself, But he who listens to reproof acquires understanding.
15:10 Stern discipline is for him who forsakes the way; He who hates reproof will die.
19:25 Strike a scoffer and the naive may become shrewd, But reprove one who has understanding and he will gain knowledge.
26:4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him.
26:5 Answer a fool as his folly *deserves*, Lest he be wise in his own eyes.
19:20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days.
27:22 Though you pound a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, *Yet* his folly will not depart from him.

17:16 Why is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy wisdom, When he has no sense?

Sometimes force is the only way to teach a fool.

26:3 A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the back of fools.

20: 30 Stripes that wound scour away evil, And strokes *reach* the innermost parts.

10:13 On the lips of the discerning, wisdom is found, But a rod is for the back of him who lacks understanding.

19:29 Judgments are prepared for scoffers, And blows for the back of fools.

Results of wisdom

Holy living

13:16 Every prudent man acts with knowledge, But a fool displays folly.

14:16 A wise man is cautious and turns away from evil, But a fool is arrogant and careless.

14:8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, But the folly of fools is deceit.

14:9 Fools mock at sin, But among the upright there is good will.

15:21 Folly is joy to him who lacks sense, But a man of understanding walks straight.

13:19 Desire realized is sweet to the soul, But it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.

19:3 The foolishness of man subverts his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.

22:3 The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive go on, and are punished for it.

27:12 A prudent man sees evil *and* hides himself, The naive proceed *and* pay the penalty.

26:11 Like a dog that returns to its vomit Is a fool who repeats his folly.

24:8 He who plans to do evil, Men will call him a schemer.

Influence with and honor from others

13:15 Good understanding produces favor, But the way of the treacherous is hard.

24:5 A wise man is strong, And a man of knowledge increases power.

26:1 **L**IKE snow in summer and like rain in harvest, So honor is not fitting for a fool.

26:8 Like one who binds a stone in a sling, So is he who gives honor to a fool.

24:7 Wisdom is too high for a fool, He does not open his mouth in the gate.

12:23 A prudent man conceals knowledge, But the heart of fools proclaims folly.

In contrast, folly makes one a dread to others

12:16 A fool's vexation is known at once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor.

17:12 Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, Rather than a fool in his folly.

24:9 The devising of folly is sin, And the scoffer is an abomination to men.

27:3 A stone is heavy and the sand weighty, But the provocation of a fool is heavier than both of them.

26:10 *Like* an archer who wounds everyone, So is he who hires a fool or who hires those who pass by.

14:7 Leave the presence of a fool, Or you will not discern words of knowledge.

14:33 Wisdom rests in the heart of one who has understanding, But in the bosom of fools it is made known.

Productiveness

20:5 A plan in the heart of a man is *like* deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out.

24:3-4 By wisdom a house is built, And by understanding it is established; And by knowledge the rooms are filled With all precious and pleasant riches.

Fools in contrast are not very useful to others and can be a source of strife.

29:8 Scorners set a city aflame, But wise men turn away anger.

13:10 Through presumption comes nothing but strife, But with those who receive counsel is wisdom.

26:6 He cuts off *his own* feet, *and* drinks violence Who sends a message by the hand of a fool.

26:7 *Like* the legs *which* hang down from the lame, So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

26:9 *Like* a thorn *which* falls into the hand of a drunkard, So is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

Success in one's endeavors

16:22 Understanding is a fountain of life to him who has it, But the discipline of fools is folly.

24:6 For by wise guidance you will wage war, And in abundance of counselors there is victory.

28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But he who walks wisely will be delivered.

13:18 Poverty and shame *will come* to him who neglects discipline, But he who regards reproof will be honored.

10:14 Wise men store up knowledge, But with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.

29:1 **A** MAN who hardens *his* neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.