

“Ancient Wisdom for a Modern World”
A Study in Proverbs
Lesson #2 – Wisdom and Instruction

Introduction: As we discussed from last week, in Prov 1:7 one finds the motto for the overall theme of the book. “Wisdom” begins with a relationship to the Creator God (a “fear” or submissive reverence to Jehovah God). Man fell prey to Satan and separated himself from God when he sought the “pride of life” (Gen 3:6; 1 John 2:16). The “**fool**” in Proverbs is not one lacking in intelligence, but rather one who is obstinate (13:16; 17:10), stubborn (v7; 17:28; 20:3; 22:15), even rude (v17:7). The root of the fool’s foolishness is not mental but spiritual. He begins by rejecting “the fear of the Lord” (v29) and determining to go his own way (v31), closing his mind to God. Whereas the simple wanders into sin (v1:4-5), the fool plans it. The Book of Proverbs refers to a third type of sinner, called a “**scoffer**” (v9:7, 8), who is the most hopeless of all. He is like a “fool” but has added to his life arrogance and active rebellion against God, and the effects of his misbehavior are greater (29:8).

Our Lesson for today we will consider:

- Our desire to acquire Wisdom
- God’s instructions

Wisdom. In the Sermon on the Mount (read Matt 5: 21-22), our Lord distinguishes the between a worthless vs. foolish person. Our Lord did not condemn the assessment of a person’s character, but the assassination of one’s character. Just as our Lord did not forbid us from discerning the character of fools, the Book of Proverbs commends this assessment as a necessity for those who would be wise. Several reasons are given for the need to discern between those who are fools and those who are wise.

1. TO ASSOCIATE WITH FOOLS IS BOTH UNWISE AND UNPLEASANT. To some degree folly is contagious, and association with a fool tends to diminish our ability to discern truth from error and wisdom from folly.

Prov 14:7

Prov 17:12

Prove 22:10

2. TO EMPLOY A FOOL IS A TRAGIC MISTAKE. Are there warnings about those who we should hire or associate in employment?

Prov 26:6

Prov 26:10

3. FOOLISHNESS IS INHERENT IN CHILDREN AND THEREFORE PARENTS MUST KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH FOLLY WHEN IT OCCURS.

Prov 10:1; 11:29; 12:15

Prov 22:15

4. FOOLS MUST BE DEALT WITH DIFFERENTLY THAN THOSE WHO ARE WISE. We cannot deal with all men in the same way. Our response to people must be based on the kind of character they have demonstrated.

Prov 9:7-8

Prov 18:2; 19:1

Prov 26:4-5; 26:8; 29:11

Instruction. Proverbs contains a set of “instructions in Chapters 1:8-9:18. For example, these instructions start with “my son, listen...” The father warns of the enticement of sinners (1:8-19) and “wisdom” warns and shouts of the dangers of life (1:22-33).

Prov 1:31 – Do need to bring calamity so to get our attention for the consequences of our actions?

Prov 1:32 - Why do we spurn wisdom? Is it because we hate knowledge? Or is it because we are we complacent (1:32) ... having a false sense of security that we would not be found out or that we would escape punishment?

Prov 4:1-4

Prov 6:20-23

Prov 7:1-3

Prov 9:7-9

Questions for Discussion

1. 2 Tim 3:15 – How does the Lord give wisdom, knowledge and understanding and what are our responsibilities to help others “see” this truth?
2. Psalms 34:13-14 – So many ways God helped David. How does He help us with the same issues today that David faced then?