



A little Bit of Foolishness Goes a Long Way

1 Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.
It only takes one lie to destroy a reputation that it took a lifetime to build and your foolishness doesn't just affect you...it brings others down with you. Therefore: don't make light of foolishness.

Where can you begin to see your folly negatively affecting others?

2. Check Your heart to Find Folly

2 A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.

He's saying that you can't just read your way into wisdom; this is ultimately an issue with your heart. The wise man's heart, his inner man, including his mind and will and affections, lead him to the place of honor and favor and protection; whereas, the fool's heart is the thing that leads him astray.

Where have you been relying too much on your rhetoric about knowing what you should do, but never really doing it? Can you be honest about this with those closest to you? Why not? What is motivating you to pretend and not together move toward lasting change with the truth?

3 Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool. You can tell a fool by his actions and they can't see that they're wrong.

7:5-6 / He likes shallow laughter

4:5, ch 10 / he's lazy.

5:3 / he talks way too much.

9:17 / he doesn't receive good advice.

Is the Holy Spirit nudging you to ask someone close to you if this is you? Who could you trust enough to speak to you like this? If its not those closest to you, ask your community for help in leaning on Christ for your righteousness and identity instead of your reputation.

4 If the anger of the ruler rises against you, do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest.

That deep and abiding hope in God who declares you His own frees you in the midst of these circumstances. The fool bolts when the boss comes down on him...right or wrong...he's the center of his universe, 'how dare he'. The wise know that humility and long suffering.

3. Fools Love the Company of Fools

5 There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as it were an error proceeding from the ruler: 6 folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. 7 I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on the ground like slaves.

Princes were trained to lead armies in battle and stuff is goes wrong when that is ignored and the unqualified are promoted to give orders. It goes wrong when the wrong people are in power. Fools also love the company of other fools. Their self-interest blinds them to their own foolishness and others suffer for it.

Can you think of a time when you sought out advice from those that you knew would tell what you wanted to hear? Are you avoiding wise counsel in an area because you want your own way?

4. Fools are Short Sighted / Don't Count the Costs

8 He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall. In the bible, you dig a pit for someone to fall in or for their animal to fall in and you break through someones wall when your mad. The fool plays with fire but doesn't expect to get burned. The fool is so hasty and short-sighted that endangers himself and others in even normal labor

9 He who quarries stones is hurt by them, and he who splits logs is endangered by them. They are so hasty in their work that they don't do adequate preparation for it, and so he mentions the fool chopping with a dull

axe.

10 If the iron is blunt, and one does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed.

Wise people know where they are going and how they plan on getting there. Here's the thing, none of the things that we want to be when we grow up just happen. I have never woken up and stumbled into deep and passionate relationship with my wife. I haven't woken up and stumbled into holiness and affection and devotion for Jesus. I haven't woken up and stumbled into intentional connection and depth with my kids. It doesn't just happen.

Where have you been doing this?

Ask yourself these questions: How am I going to do that? How do I work smarter? How does it affect my wife and kids? What do I let go of for the sake of being the man that God is calling me to be? Where are you going? How are you going to get there?

How will you practically go about answering these questions?

If you don't answer these, you'll wake up one day to discover that all of your 'want to's' have become 'wish I should have's'. Instead of living with purpose and direction you wake up weighed down with regret and you find yourself tempted to live in the past or make excuses for the present.

What should have's have you already experienced? What can you/we learn from this? Have you applied this area to the gospel and been comforted by it? If not, ask your community to help you.

11 If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage to the charmer. Don't sit there and hear me say that you have to leave here and make yourself into this person...the cultivating of the soul is the work of the HS in you and your cooperation with Him. It's not enough to just 'want to be'...all that will get you is a lifetime of regret and disappointment.

Chapter 11

1 Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days.

Trading- That is where the returns were found back then. This took time for the ships to travel, sell, and return and the delay is not enough reason to not do anything. Take risks!

2 Give a portion to seven, or even to eight, for you know not what disaster may happen on earth.

But don't be foolish...hedge your bets and spread out the risk. Don't load it all in the same boat. Remember the unexpected may occur, plan for it. But don't avoid it. Doing nothing is foolish.

3 If the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth, and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it will lie. 4 He who observes the wind will not sow, and he who regards the clouds will not reap.

Much of life is out of our control...but that's no excuse for inactivity...don't let speculation justify laziness. We've all done that haven't we? There's always a good reason to delay. To not take on that responsibility, speak that word, serve that need, hire that person, start that business...maybe or maybe your just lazy?

What are you not doing? Are you afraid to fail? What are you afraid will happen if you do? Let your Community challenge you to look at these hesitations and fears in light of God's character and promises. How much pride and rebellious desire for control is involved in your disobedience? What are the consequences of NOT doing the risky thing?

What assurances are found the in gospel to alleviate your fears? For example, Col 3:1-4: (this passage has meant a lot to me recently, consider using one you've leaned into recently)

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

When I consider that “my life” is already over. Which is great news when I consider that “my life” did and does nothing but heap more misery and judgment upon me due to my selfishness and sin. And that anything that matters ultimately and eternally is “hidden” (secured, and protected) with Christ, it helps me push through my fears because any potential “loss” is not really loss. What really matters cannot be taken away from us so we can obey, no matter what seemingly potential dangers are there.

5 As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything. 6 In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

If you keep delaying don't think you'll work it all out...only God knows it all. At least someone does. It's not senseless even if we can't make sense. Trust him. Push the boat out.

Morning / evening - Don't just sow in one season...stay active for the glory of God. What is retirement? Retire from what? Keep sowing your seed...the way may change but keep going. Live life, take risks, push the boat out, and leave the outcome to God. You're still breathing...don't waste it!

The only servant Jesus rebuked is the one who buried the talent in the ground. God has given us so much...from Jesus and grace and the HS to empower us to the gifts that he empowers us through...in the meantime make it all count. It's obedience. Don't be a fool. 'May we be those who hear your word and put it into practice for Jesus sake'. (James)

Reflection Questions

What stood out to you this morning? How are you compelled to respond?

Where do you see the traits of 'the fool' in your heart and life?

Do you know where you are headed? Do you have a plan for getting there?