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Title: The Difference Between the Wise Man and the Foolish Man

Text: Matthew 7:24-29

Part 1 - The Foolish Man

The Bible often talks about the character called “the fool” especially in the book of Proverbs. However, the word “fool” is also mentioned over 60 times throughout the Bible! Being a fool has less to do with a person’s intelligence, and more to do with their attitude, character, and heart.

What Does It Mean to Be A Fool?

According to the Bible, a fool is a person who “knows right from wrong, yet still chooses to do wrong.” The fool is the person who lives by his or her own rules, disregarding the consequences of their actions.

Five Types of Fools

In the Old Testament, the word fool is a translation of five different Hebrew words that reflect subtle differences in “types” of fools. Unfortunately, the English translation makes it more difficult to identify the characteristics of five types of fools, but with a careful search of Scripture these differences can be distinguished.

The Simple Fool

- The simple fool opens his mind to any passing thought and opens his arms to any passing stranger. In other words, he lacks discernment. He has an over-simplified view of life and fails to recognize the cause-and-effect sequences that affect every area of life.
- He is easily captivated by all kinds of enticements and deceptions.
- He is dangerously immature, extremely gullible, and intensely curious.
- A simple fool is especially vulnerable to seduction, lacking an understanding of the irreversible consequences of moral failure.

The Silly Fool

- Its definition is “to be perverse, silly.” The mouth of a silly fool often gets him in trouble.
- A silly fool believes that his own way of thinking is right.

The Sensual Fool

- One who rejects the correction of parents or other authorities will become a sensual fool. It means “dull; heavy; stupid; unteachable.” The word denotes a person who seems determined to make wrong choices. He does not have a mental deficiency, but rather rejects the wisdom of God.
- The sensual fool’s focus is on that which brings him immediate pleasure. He glories in that of which he should be ashamed.
- A sensual fool is unreasonable. As a silly fool, his mouth got him into trouble. Now, as a sensual fool, his mouth gets him into more trouble.

The Scorning Fool

- The Hebrew word means “to make mouths at, i.e. to scoff.” The scorning fool’s facial expressions communicate the disdain and contempt he has in his heart toward authorities, including parents, civil authorities, and God.
- This type of fool not only has rejected truth; he also has embraced that which is abominable to God. The scorning fool utterly detests people and ideas that contradict his false thinking, and he expresses his scorn through derisive attitudes, behavior, and speech.
- The scorning fool turns a deaf ear to rebuke: “A wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scorner does not listen to rebuke.” (Proverbs 13:1).
- Those who attempt to lead the scorning fool away from the path of destruction that he seems determined to follow will suffer his wrath.

The Steadfast Fool

- The most dangerous type of fool is a steadfast fool. The Hebrew word means “stupid, wicked,” identifies this type of person. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, it also is translated as vile person.
- A steadfast fool totally rejects God and His ways. “The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good.” (Psalm 14:1).
- This type of fool is self-confident and close-minded.
- He is his own god, freely gratifying his lower nature.
- It is his goal to draw as many others as possible into his evil ways.
- Attempts to reprove him will be futile and bring frustration to the one who tries to influence him.
- Only God can successfully reprove a steadfast fool.