

Michael Brown Asks, 'Are You a Fool According to the Bible?'

As defined by the Scriptures, a fool is not someone who is uneducated or a person with a low IQ. Rather, a fool is someone who is deeply deficient spiritually and morally.

As summed up in Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Are you a fool according to the Bible? Am I?

Let's look at just a few of the characteristics of the fool as laid out in Proverbs.

1) "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who listens to counsel is wise" (Prov. 12:15). The fool is always right in his (or her eyes), never willing to take correction, never willing to listen to sound advice, never willing to acknowledge error or wrong.

Perhaps we are not this extreme in our stubbornness, but is this our general tendency? Can people approach us easily, without fear? Do we receive correction with humility and even appreciation?

That's why Proverbs 9:8 says, "Do not reprove a scorner, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you." So also Proverbs 17:10: "A reproof enters deeper into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool."

Are you foolish or are you wise?

2) "A fool's wrath is presently known, but a prudent man covers shame" (Prov. 12:16). Fools lack self-control. They are easily annoyed, easily angered, easily provoked. In contrast, those who are prudent will overlook insult and shaming. Which

attitude would your friends and family and co-workers say is more characteristic of you?

According to Proverbs, lack of self-control is one of the most common characteristics of a fool. "A wise man fears and departs from evil, but the fool rages and is self-confident. He who is quick-tempered deals foolishly, and a man of wicked devices is hated" (Prov. 14:16-17).

And, "A fool utters all his mind, but a wise man keeps it in until afterwards" (Prov. 29:11).

Are you known as a hothead? Does everyone around you know immediately when you are annoyed? Do you find it hard to overlook an insult?

On a scale of 1-10, if 1 stood for "wise" and 10 stood for "foolish," how would you score yourself? And how would those closest to you score you?

To quote one more relevant verse (among many), "He who is slow to wrath is of great understanding, but he who is hasty of spirit exalts folly" (Prov. 14:29).

What are we displaying by our lives and our words?

3) "The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright, but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness" (Prov. 15:2). Because a foolish person lacks humility and self-control, he or she is quick to speak, blurting out whatever comes to mind. As Proverbs 14:3 states, "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise will preserve them."

In fact, throughout the Bible, few things are so characteristic of fools as this: They have no filter on their lips. They think something and they speak. They do not exercise self-restraint.

Just read these verses for yourself, and see if they are relevant in your own life. I have looked at my life through

this grid many times and plan to continue do so while I have breath. “A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for flogging. A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul” (Prov. 18:6-7). “It is an honor for a man to cease from strife, but every fool will be meddling” (Prov. 20:3).

According to Proverbs 12:18, “There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is health.”

Do our words bring healing, or do they tear down and destroy? Is our speech restrained, bringing life, or is our speech reckless, piercing like a sword?

4) “A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart” (Prov. 18:2). Proverbs is quite blunt about this: “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him” (Prov. 18:13). And, “Do you see a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Prov. 26:12). And, “Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him” (Prov. 29:20).

Often on social media, when posting my latest article for discussion, I will add, “Please read the article before sharing your thoughts on the article.”

Yes, I actually have to do this, as ridiculous as it sounds.

Just think of telling a music critic, “Please listen to the song before you share your thoughts on the song.” Or, think of telling a food critic, “Please eat the meal before describing how it tastes.”

Unfortunately, despite my appeal, it is very common for people simply to see a headline and then air their opinion. More times than not, had they actually read the article first, they would not have posted their comment.

That's why, after seeing all kinds of passionate (but irrelevant and even misguided) discussion in response to one of my recent articles, I posted this, "I have this crazy dream that one day everyone will read the article before they post their comments in response to the article! It would really save a whole lot of wasted words. But I'm probably just dreaming. Many will still air their opinions before reading the content of what I write. I guess I just have to accept it."

When we do this, when we answer before listening, when we speak before we understand, we display the characteristics of a fool.

The other day, a woman rebuked me on Facebook for criticizing those who still expected Trump to be the president, while, she claimed, I failed ever to say a word against the policies of Joe Biden or other Democrats.

I asked in reply, "Have you not read my articles addressing Democratic policies on abortion and religious freedom and transgender activism and China and Iran?"

She replied, "I haven't read your stuff for years. I'm unfollowing you now."

This is all too common in our day, and when we act like this, we are shouting out for the world to see, "I am acting like a fool!"

How about we read a chapter of Proverbs each day, which basically takes you through the book 12 times in a year?

Recognizing my own lack of wisdom over the years, and having a terrible, fierce temper when I came to faith in 1971, I've read through Proverbs countless times, also asking God for wisdom again and again. That's a prayer He loves to answer.

If this article made you angry, or if you posted a comment

before you read it, or if you're about to blast me for virtue-signaling by quoting so much of the Bible, perhaps you'd do better to look in the mirror first.

Are you foolish, or are you wise? {eoa}

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