



BETTER

Short-Term Thinking

#npbetter

Week 10

10 of 12

August 9, 2020

Bottom Line: Foolishness is simply thinking of and living for the short-term.

Icebreaker: What's the best April Fool's prank you know about? Or what's the most foolish purchase you ever made?

Key Verse: *As dead flies cause even a bottle of perfume to stink, so a little foolishness spoils great wisdom and honor.*
Ecclesiastes 10:1 NLT

In the first nine chapters of Ecclesiastes, Solomon has been talking about wisdom. Now he turns to folly, or foolishness. If wisdom brings about what is right, then foolishness results in what is wrong. A fool in the biblical sense is not necessarily someone with below-average intelligence. Rather, the term refers to someone who lacks the proper fear of God and therefore is prone to go the wrong direction in life.

Solomon lists clear identifiers of a fool. His reputation stinks. It is the exact opposite of a wise person. His worldview is wrong. Because he has no wisdom in his heart, he gravitates to what is wrong. He doesn't have any sense and it shows. You can spot a fool a mile away by his actions.

There are several categories of fools. There are even foolish leaders. There are foolish workers who endanger themselves and others. There are foolish talkers who destroy themselves by their own words. Their foolish word may be destructive, unreasonable, uncontrolled, or boastful. But the common link is that they are foolish. There are generally people who are foolish whose folly makes the simplest things in life wearying.

Solomon reveals four qualities you will find in every fool. A fool is indulgent. He misuses what God has given and wastes his life for his own pleasures. A fool is incompetent, not because he is not smart enough but because he is lazy and negligent. Fools are indifferent and care only for temporary things, not eternal. They don't care about others. A fool is indiscreet. A wise person keeps confidences, but a fool spreads rumors. He widely and carelessly criticizes. Clearly, a fool lives opposite to a wise man, and reaps a dramatically different outcome.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

Think of a situation lately where you saw wisdom bring about what is right, or foolishness bring out what is wrong. Did people realize what was happening?

Most of us have been taught that it is wrong to call a person a fool. But Solomon is very clear about who is a fool. A fool lacks proper fear of God and is therefore prone to go in the wrong direction in life. How does that open your eyes in some relationships you have? What difference does that make in how you should relate?

How is a good reputation among one of a person's most valuable possessions?

People who often lack the boldness or rashness to say things face to face become true fools on social media by using words Solomon describes as destructive, unreasonable, uncontrolled, and boastful. Why do you think that is?

Fools refuse to listen. Reflect and discuss.

LOOK IT OVER <<<

Leaders are foolish when they give authority to foolish people. How do you think really good leaders fall into this mistake?

What makes a fool's reputation stink?

What makes his worldview wrong?

Negligence is as damaging as abuse. Fools easily slide into negligent living. Where have you experienced this? Personal possessions? Finances? Relationships? Jobs?

Fools care for the things that are temporary and are indifferent to the things that are eternal. Reflect and discuss.

Discuss foolish indiscretion with our words.

The book *Fool-Proofing Your Life* by Jan Silvius is very helpful.

NEXT STEPS

1. Consider the qualities and characteristics of a fool. Do you see any in yourself?
2. If so, work with God to humble yourself to change the way you think and act in that area.
3. Memorize Ephesians 5:15-17.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Foolishness is simply thinking of and living for the short-term.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 13:11

Tuesday: Proverbs 17:28

Wednesday: Proverbs 16:22

Thursday: Proverbs 26:8

Friday: Proverbs 26:11-12

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)