

Introduction: There is a difference between: 1. acting foolish (13xs in Proverbs); 2. involving yourself in foolishness (8xs in Proverbs); and 3. being a fool as a way of life (61xs in Proverbs). Solomon makes mention of fools 82 times in the book of Proverbs.

1. THE MEANING OF A FOOL (What is a fool?)

There are four Hebrew words Solomon uses to describe a fool.

A. Proverbs 9:6 "**fool**" (Hebrew "peti") referring to someone who is **naive, immature, easily enticed, or open to anything**. (used 1xs in Proverbs) They believe anything and must be taught. Relates "to the immature or simple one who is open to all kinds of enticement, not having developed a discriminating judgment as to what is right or wrong. If the 'peti' refuses to learn he will go on to inherit folly (Proverbs 14:18). To achieve moral and spiritual maturity the naive are encouraged to receive prudence (Proverbs 1:4), to understand wisdom (Proverbs 8:5), and to dwell where wisdom makes her home (Proverbs 9:4). Otherwise, he may drift into temptation and then sin, immorality (Proverbs 7:7), robbery and murder (Proverbs 1:10-14). Apart from godly tutelage, he is on the road to death (Proverbs 7:7; 22:3)."

("peti" by Louis Goldberg in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 2, page 742)

B. Proverbs 17:7 "**fool**" (Hebrew "nabal") referring to someone who is **insensible, closes the mind to reason, and spiritually void**. (used 3xs in Proverbs).

"The 'nabal,' who should keep himself in retirement because of his impiety, is a boor and makes himself heard in public (Proverbs 17:7). The earth protests when a 'nabal' grows rich; such a one becomes arrogant and overbearing (Proverbs 30:22)."

("nabal" by Louis Goldberg in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol.2, page 547)

C. Proverbs 1:22 "**fool**" (Hebrew "kesil") referring to someone who is **stubborn, thick headed, obstinate, self-confident**, having a propensity to make the wrong choices. (used 49xs in Proverbs).

"His eyes are unable to see any proper way or conduct. He may roam the earth seeking it, but miss it completely. Apparently, he does not concentrate on what is right (Proverbs 17:24). The fool imagines that he can buy wisdom when actually he has no inclination for it (Proverbs 17:16). He takes no delight in understanding (Proverbs 18:2), hates knowledge (Proverbs 1:22), and therefore does not choose the fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:29). The end of the fool's complacency is destruction (Proverbs 1:32)."

("kesil" by Louis Goldberg in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 449)

D. Proverbs 1:7 "**fool**" (Hebrew "ewil") referring to someone who is **insolent or arrogant**. (used 26xs in Proverbs) This word comes from a root word which mean "thick" as in thick-brained or stupid, referring to moral deficiency. "Such as person is lacking in sense and is generally corrupt. If one can posit a graduation in the words for fool 'ewil' would be one step below 'kesil' and only one step above 'nabal.' The 'ewil' is not only a 'kesil' because of his choices, but he is also insolent. As indicated, 'ewil' primarily refers to moral perversion or insolence. This kind of fool despises wisdom and is impatient with discipline."

("ewil" by Louis Goldberg in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, page 19)

2. THE MENTALITY OF A FOOL (How does a foolish person think?)

Foolish people think some of the following thoughts:

- A. Proverbs 1:7 = despises wisdom and instruction
- B. Proverbs 1:22 = hates knowledge
- C. Proverbs 12:15 = does what is right in his own eyes
- D. Proverbs 13:19 = an abomination to depart from evil
- E. Proverbs 14:9 = mocks at sin
- F. Proverbs 15:5 = despiseth father's instruction
- G. Proverbs 15:20 = despiseth mother
- H. Proverbs 17:16 = no heart for wisdom
- I. Proverbs 18:2 = no delight in understanding
- J. Proverbs 19:3 = fretteth against God

3. THE MANNERISM OF A FOOL (How does a foolish person act?)
Foolish people live in specific ways.

- A. Proverbs 9:13 = clamorous
- B. Proverbs 10:18 = uttereth a slander
- C. Proverbs 12:23 = proclaim foolish
- D. Proverbs 13:16 = spreadeth his folly
- E. Proverbs 14:1 = teareth down a house
- F. Proverbs 14:3 = rod of pride in mouth
- G. Proverbs 14:8 = deceit
- H. Proverbs 14:9 = mocks at sin
- I. Proverbs 14:16 = rageth
- J. Proverbs 15:2 = mouth pour out
- K. Proverbs 15:14 = mouth feedeth on foolishness
- L. Proverbs 18:6 = lips enter into contention
- M. Proverbs 19:1 = perverse lips
- N. Proverbs 20:3 = meddles

O. Proverbs 21:20 = spends what he has

P. Proverbs 29:11 = uttereth all his mind

4. THE MANAGEMENT OF A FOOL (How should the wise deal with the fool?)

There are at least three characters listed that are in great need of wisdom

A. Proverbs 7:22 = correction through restriction

B. Proverbs 9:6 = forsake foolish

C. Proverbs 14:7 = go from the presence of a foolish man

D. Proverbs 14:33 = make it known

E. Proverbs 17:28 = holdeth his peace

F. Proverbs 19:29 = stripes for the back of fools

G. Proverbs 22:15 = rod of correction

E. Proverbs 23:9 = don't speak in the ears of a fool

F. Proverbs 26:1,8 = don't give honor to a fool

G. Proverbs 26:4-5 = answer not a fool according to his folly

H. Proverbs 30:32 = lay your hand on your mouth

5. THE MENACE OF A FOOL (What do fools cause around them?)

Fools are dangerous and must be stopped because they cause the following:

A. Proverbs 17:21 = sorrow no joy to a parent

B. Proverbs 17:25 = grief and bitterness to a parent

C. Proverbs 19:3 = perverts his own way

D. Proverbs 19:13 = calamity of his father

E. Proverbs 26:6 = causes personal harm and violence

6. THE MISERY OF A FOOL (What do fools bring to themselves?)

There are at least seven major consequences associated with rejecting wisdom.

A. Proverbs 1:32 = destruction

B. Proverbs 3:35 = shame

C. Proverbs 10:8,10 = a fall

D. Proverbs 18:7 = destruction

Conclusion: There are enough fools in the world. We need to not become one and we need to learn more about dealing with them.