

**Prov. 17:2, 10, 24:** A servant who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully & will share the inheritance as one of the brothers . . . <sup>10</sup> A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool . . . <sup>24</sup> The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.

**Intro:** These proverbs teach you how a wise person lives. **Prov. 9:10:** The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; (Discipline of children – *Shepherding A Child's Heart* by Tedd Tripp) **GOSPEL!**

**God gives wisdom: 1 Ki. 3:5-14:** At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, & God said, "Ask what I shall give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great & steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, & in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great & steadfast love & have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good & evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, & have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise & discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you & none like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches & honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes & my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."  
- Those who have God's wisdom are humble & teachable, focus on what counts, & receive a great reward!

### **1. The Humility & Teachability Of The Wise**

**Prov. 17:10:** A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.

You can beat & beat & beat a fool, & they won't get wisdom or understanding (more than twice the 40 stripes allowed for the worst crimes!). But it only takes a word of rebuke to the wise man, & he will change!

- **Charles Bridges:** A word was enough for David. A look entered more in Peter's heart, than a hundred stripes into Pharaoh, Ahaz, & Israel.

- **Eric Lane:** Nowhere does the difference between [the] wise & [the] foolish appear more clearly than in their response to rebukes & punishment . . . The plagues of Egypt didn't change the mind of Pharaoh, but David was convicted by one word from Nathan: "You are the man!"

**a. Fools hate correction & they don't learn from it:** Foolish people are wise in their own eyes. Fools think they know everything. Fools think everything they do is right. So they hate correction & rebuke. They don't listen to rebuke & correction. They dismiss it as people being too critical or just flat out wrong.

**b. God's wise men love correction & learn from it:** The wise know they are like little children. They know they have so much to learn. They know they don't know everything. They know they have much room for improvement. So they love correction & rebuke. They listen to rebuke & correction & take it to heart to see what they might learn & how they might grow. Even if the rebukes are misguided, the wise considers them to see if there is any truth at all in them so that they might grow more & more into the image of Jesus Christ.

- **Prov. 9:7-9:** Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, & he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury. Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, & he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, & he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, & he will increase in learning.

- **Prov. 12:15:** The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.

- **Prov. 13:1:** A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

- **Prov. 15:5:** A fool despises his father's instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is prudent.

- **Prov. 29:1:** He who is often reprov'd, yet stiffens his neck, will suddenly be broken beyond healing.

**c. The heart: fools are arrogant:** Have you ever met a know-it-all who cannot be corrected? They are proud!  
 - **Prov. 26:12:** Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.  
 - **1 Cor. 8:1-2:** Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know.  
 - **Derick Kidner:** If you think you are above criticism, you are not worth it.  
 - **Spurgeon:** If any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him, for you are worse than he thinks you to be.  
 - **Thomas Watson:** A humble Christian studies his own [weaknesses], & another's excellencies.

**d. Fools don't understand that they can be deceived: 1 Cor. 6:9:** Do not be deceived  
 - **1 Cor. 15:33:** Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals.  
 - **Gal. 6:7:** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.  
 - **James 1:16:** Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.  
 - **John Kitchen:** [A fool] refuses to believe that anyone else may see things more clearly than he.  
 - **Charles Bridges:** O my God! Save me from myself – from my own self-deceitfulness!

**e. God's wise men are humble:** Humble people realize they have a lot of room to grow! They don't know it all! They can learn from others, even a child! – **1 Pet. 5:5:** God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.  
 - **Phil. 2:3:** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves

**f. Jesus never needed any correction:** There is one man who never needed any rebuke or correction! Jesus never, not once, in thought, word, or deed, did anything that needed to be rebuked! Yet, Jesus took the infinite blows of the wrath of His Father on that cross & was treated more shamefully than anyone ever on that cross so that you might be saved!

**g. Jesus did grow in wisdom: Luke 2:51-52:** he went down with them & came to Nazareth & was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom & in stature & in favor with God & man.

**h. Jesus took all the blows of God's wrath on that cross for our foolishness: Phil. 2:5-11:** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven & on earth & under the earth, & every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**i. Because of Jesus' death & resurrection, you are free to receive criticism & learn: Alfred Poirier:** The cross of Christ reminds me that the Son of God loved me & gave Himself for me. & because of this, God has thoroughly & forever accepted me in Christ . . . What a sure foundation for the soul! Now, I don't practice self-justification, but boasting – boasting about Christ's righteousness for me. If you truly take this to heart, the whole world can stand against you, denounce you, or criticize you, & you will be able to reply, "If God has justified me, who can condemn me?" "If God justifies me, accepts me, & will never forsake me, then why should I feel insecure & fear criticism?" "Christ took my sins, & I receive His Spirit. Christ takes my condemnation, & I receive His righteousness." In light of God's judgment & justification of the sinner in the cross of Christ, we can begin to discover how to deal with any & all criticism. By agreeing with God's criticism of me in Christ's cross, I can face any criticism man may lay against me. In other words, no one can criticize me more than the cross has, & the most devastating criticism turns out to be the finest mercy. If you thus know yourself as having been crucified with Christ, then you can respond to any criticism, even mistaken or hostile criticism, without bitterness, defensiveness, or blame-shifting. Such responses typically . . . intensify conflict, & lead to the rupture of relationships. You can learn to hear criticism as constructive & not [condemning] because God has justified you.  
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## **2. The Focus Of The Wise**

**Prov. 17:24:** The discerning sets his face toward wisdom, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth.

**a. God's wise men love wisdom & pursue it with pin point focus:** The wise have a powerful focus on the one thing that matters most! Christ, Who is all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge! (*The Main Thing In Life* song!)

- **Ps. 27:4:** One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.

**John Kitchen:** Mary's "one thing" set her apart from Martha, who was "worried & bothered by so many things". Jesus demanded focused allegiance when He announced, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow & looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God". Paul narrowed his interests until He could say, "this one thing I do" (Phil. 3:13). We are to be "fixing our eyes on Jesus". Such focus makes the pursuit & discovery of wisdom achievable. "A scoffer seeks wisdom, & finds none. But knowledge is easy to him who has understanding".

**b. Fools hate wisdom & are distracted by foolish whim after foolish whim:** Fools have no focus & move from one thing to another & never make any progress toward the goal of wisdom or anything fruitful or pleasing to God.

- **Commentator:** Fools are distracted. Their focus is too broad & scattered.

- **Bruce Waltke:** The fool fails because he orients himself to distant, godless, & unattainable goals instead of on attainable wisdom that stands nearby ready to serve him well.

- **John Kitchen:** Unlike the wise man, who has set his goal upon wisdom, ever keeping it in his view, the eyes of the fool flit to & fro from one thing to the other, never able to consistently keep his interest & focus set upon one thing, let alone that which matters most of all. The "ends of the earth" is a metaphorical way of referring to all the far-flung fancies of a mind that is never at rest. His attention never settles on one thing.

**c. Jesus' focus was unshakable & undistractable: Lk. 9:51:** Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly [resolutely] set His face to go to Jerusalem

- **Matt. 16:23:** But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

- **John 4:34:** Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me & to accomplish his work."

- **Luke 19:10:** For the Son of Man came to seek & to save the lost.

- **John 6:38:** For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.

- **Mark 10:45:** the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, & to give his life as a ransom for many.

- **John 17:4:** I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

**d. May we have Christ-like focus for the sake of the lost: John Piper:** God did not ordain the cross of Christ or create the lake of fire in order to communicate the insignificance of belittling his glory. The death of the Son of God & the damnation of unrepentant human beings are the loudest shouts under heaven that God is infinitely holy, & sin is infinitely offensive, & wrath is infinitely just, & grace is infinitely precious, & our brief life – & the life of every person in your church & in your community – leads to everlasting joy or everlasting pain. This has got to grip us. There is a weight to this office. If our preaching does not carry the weight of these things to our people, what will? Veggie Tales? Radio? Television? Discussion groups? Emergent conversations? God planned for his Son to be crucified & for hell to be terrible so that we would have the clearest witnesses possible to what is at stake when we preach. What gives preaching its seriousness is that the mantle of preaching is soaked with the blood of Jesus and singed with the fire of hell. That's the mantle that turns mere talkers into preachers.

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## **3. The Reward Of The Wise & The Dethroning Of The Foolish**

**Prov. 17:2:** A servant who deals wisely will rule over a son who acts shamefully & will share the inheritance as one of the brothers.

**The movie, *Gladiator*:** In the Roman empire, the emperor's foolish son is past over because the emperor realizes his favorite general of the army is more wise, humble, & fit to rule.

**a. This is a warning to foolish, shameful sons:** If you act in an unwise, ungodly way, you will lose out while the wise servant will be rewarded!

- **John Kitchen:** The point is that production is more worthy than privilege. A lazy son will lose out, while a diligent servant may come to have a share in the harvest. Faithfulness is thicker than blood. The "son who acts shamefully" may do so by disrespect & violence, indulgent living, or willfulness.

- **Duane Garrett:** Ability & character can overcome the disadvantages of birth. At the same time, those born to advantage can forfeit their birthright through immorality & incompetence.

- **Eccl. 10:7:** I have seen slaves on horses, & princes walking on the ground like slaves.

- **John Kitchen:** Such a result was out of the norm, but not unheard of. Thus, this proverb was meant to shock a slothful son into action & faithfulness:

- **Prov. 11:29:** Whoever troubles his own household will inherit the wind, the & fool will be servant to the wise of heart.

- **Prov. 12:24:** The hand of the diligent will rule, while the slothful will be put to forced labor.

**Bruce Waltke:** The law made no provision for this supplanting of a foolish son by a prudent slave, but it did provide for stoning a rebellious son: **Deut. 21:18-23:** If a man has a stubborn & rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, &, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father & his mother shall take hold of him & bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, & they shall say to the elders of his city, "This our son is stubborn & rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton & a drunkard." Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, & all Israel shall hear, and fear. <sup>22</sup> & if a man has committed a crime punishable by death & he is put to death, & you hang him on a tree, <sup>23</sup> his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God.

**b. Jesus gives this kind of warning in spiritual terms: Matt. 8:11-12:** I tell you, many will come from east & west & recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping & gnashing of teeth.

**c. Jesus is the son treated like a slave so that you might be adopted as a son & inherit the world:** Jesus took the form of a slave (Phil. 2) & died under God's wrath for all of your sins & foolishness – as if He was disowned! But He is risen! & He rules! & He will have the nations as His inheritance! & we are His brothers & will rule with Him! If you trust in Him, you are adopted as sons & daughters of God, & you shall inherit the world!

- **Rom. 8:16-17:** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, & if children, then heirs – heirs of God & fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him

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Christ Jesus Is The Son Who Rules  
With All Wisdom, Evil Cools  
Has More Knowledge Than Every School  
Yet Counted Sin As Wicked Fools  
Killed As Breaker Of God's Rules  
Bore God's Wrath Forever Cools  
Then Rose Alive, He's Heaven's Jewels  
By Faith Alone He Saves The Fools  
And Makes Us Wise – His Spirit Rules  
For Him, We'll Leave All Earthly Jewels  
And With All Wisdom Live His Rules!