

Ecclesiastes 10:1-7
5 Fingers of Folly:
Common, Sad Realities of It

“The Preacher sought to find **words of delight**,
and uprightly he wrote **words of truth**.
The **words of the wise** are like **goads**,
and like **nails** firmly fixed are the collected sayings;
they are given by **one Shepherd**.”
(*Ecclesiastes 12:10-11*)

the proverbs of Ecclesiastes

folly

- * when a human does not truly fear/revere God in his/her heart
or feel need for Him for living life
- * no or little concern with what God thinks/wants/wills for him/her
- * to prefer and choose own way of handling life under the sun (hard or easy)

“For although they *knew* God,
they *did not honor* him as God or *give thanks* to him,
but they **became futile in their thinking**,
and **their foolish hearts were darkened**.
Claiming to be wise, they became fools...” (*Romans 1:21-22*)

“The way of a fool is **right in his own eyes...**” (*Proverbs 12:15*)

wisdom

- * when one truly fears/reveres God, one feels great need for His help (as a Father)
- * concerned greatly with what God thinks/wants (and the responsibility of answering to Him)

where we're coming from...

last part of Ecclesiastes 9 *Some Truths About Wisdom*

v. 11-12 Time and chance happen to every human. All get ensnared by evil times.

v. 13-15 *wisdom parable*: Even one wise person can make a big difference in terrible life circumstances. But fools forget its benefits and value.

v. 16 Despite wisdom often being despised and ignored, it is far, *far* better than might—

v. 17 so listen, *listen*, LISTEN to the quiet words of the wise, though fool's ideas/philosophies/answers are far more prominent/loud

v. 18 It's far better to follow God's Word/wisdom than rely on fool's weapons of war

where we're going...

first part of Ecclesiastes 10 *Some Common, Sad Truths About Folly*

v. 1—the *influence* of folly

v. 2—the *way* of folly

v. 3—the *insensibility* of folly

v. 4—the *danger* of folly (*around anger or hard situations*)

v. 5-7—the *irony* of folly

the human tendency toward foolishness.....our great need for more wisdom

the human tendency toward foolishness.....our great need for more wisdom

“....**Never be wise in your own sight.**” (Romans 12:16)

“Whoever **trusts in his own mind** is a fool,
but **he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.**” (Proverbs 28:26)

“**Trust in the Lord with all your heart,**
and **do not lean on your own understanding** ^[SEP] **In all your ways acknowledge him,**
and **he will make straight your paths.** ^[SEP] **Be not wise in your own eyes;**
fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

It will be **healing to your flesh**
and **refreshment to your bones.**” (Proverbs 3:5-8)

v. 1 The Influence of Folly

Dead flies make the perfumer's ointment give off a stench; so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

Seemingly small flaws/factors can prove to have a widespread effect.

The stench that accompanies flies can quickly overwhelm what wisdom has perfumed.

Wisdom is stronger/better but...sinners/fools can still do serious damage (*Ecc 9:18*)

Even a 'little' folly can turn a once wise/honorable person into a disgrace.

Wisdom builds slowly; folly spoils quickly.

v. 2 The Way of Folly

A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.

the right a path thru life or direction that brings strength...protection...honor

the left the opposite direction...that leads to weakness...harm...ruin...shame...dishonor

“The wise will inherit honor,
but fools get disgrace.” (*Proverbs 3:25*)

“There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.” (*Proverbs 14:12/16:25*)

The fool “will follow a path that seems to be right,
even when the blacktop gives way to gravel
and gravel to dirt and dirt to rocks and debris.
Almost nothing will stop the fool from plunging ahead into peril.” (*Dan Allender*)

“He talks a good game but does not know where the goal line is.” (*Ian Provan*)

A wise man's heart inclines him to the right, but a fool's heart to the left.

There is no third kind of direction/path humans can take. We either incline toward being wiser or more foolish as each day passes.

The leaning of the heart determines the direction...and destiny...of every life

The battle for the heart requires carefulness in every step. Those quickly become paths.

Foolish choices carry fools further and further away from paths of wisdom and its blessings.

This is why “Follow your heart” can be dangerous advice. The human heart needs to follow the Lord's heart/will/word, not just whatever inclination it may feel.

v. 3 The Insensibility of Folly

Even when the fool walks on the road, he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool.

“...the heart of fools proclaims folly” (*Proverbs 12:23*)

**“In everything the prudent acts with knowledge,
but a fool flaunts his folly.”** (*Proverbs 13:16*)

**“A fool gives full vent to his spirit,
but a wise man quietly holds it back.”** (*Proverbs 29:11*)

Wherever folly remains in the human heart, it will evidence itself in time.

Folly is hard to hide for long.

The more one talks, the more easily folly of one's heart can and will be revealed.

v. 4 The Danger of Folly

**4 If the anger of the ruler rises against you,
do not leave your place, for calmness will lay great offenses to rest.**

“I say: Keep the king's command, because of God's oath to him.

Be not hasty to go from his presence.

**Do not take your stand in an evil cause,
for he does whatever he pleases.**

For the word of the king is supreme,
and who may say to him, "What are you doing?"
Whoever keeps a command will know no evil thing,
and **the wise heart will know the proper time and the just way.**
For there is a time and a way for everything,
although man's trouble lies heavy on him." (*Ecclesiastes 8:2-6*)

"Be not quick in your spirit to become angry,
for **anger lodges in the heart of fools.**" (*Ecclesiastes 7:9*)

"With patience a ruler may be persuaded,
and a soft tongue will break a bone." (*Proverbs 25:15*)

"Righteous lips are the delight of a king,
and he loves him who speaks what is right.
A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
and **a wise man will appease it.**" (*Proverbs 16:13-14*)

"A soft answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger." (*Proverbs 15:1*)

Foolish actions can rouse authority's anger to even greater degree, but a patient, calm spirit will more likely resolve the conflict.

"Calm heads prevail."

A wise, calm response to great offense can spare a man much pain and regret.

A peace-making response to an offense has more potential to help/heal than a rash reaction.

It is the mark of a fool to perpetuate the hardship of one foolish decision by making more foolish decisions.

v. 5-7 The Irony of Folly

There is an evil that I have seen under the sun,
as it were an error proceeding from the ruler:
folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place.
I have seen slaves on horses,
and princes walking on the ground like slaves.

"It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury—
how much **worse for a slave to rule over princes.**" (*Proverbs 19:10*)

“...when the wicked rise, people **hide themselves**.” (*Proverbs 28:12,28*)

“Whenever we see things turned upside down—whenever a society celebrates immorality, perpetrates wrongful violence, punishes righteousness, denies the authority of God, or persecutes his people—we may be sure that folly is in control.” (*Phil Rykien*)

Sadly, fools end up in places where great wisdom is needed.

Again, often things are ‘upside down’ or just not make logical sense

Folly shows up everywhere. Don’t be caught off-guard by it but expect it. It will often make the way of wisdom harder.

Folly is often exacerbated when it is allowed to thrive in places of power/influence.

Foolish leadership destabilizes communities, nations, workplaces, and churches.

When foolish people rise to power, everything gets inverted. Disorder becomes the norm.

Thinking about what the Preacher has said...

**Is there ‘cause for pause’ in these proverbs and principles for you?
Do you see any evidences of these follies in your own ways?**

There is a clear, defined STARTING POINT of humans into the wisdom of God:

the Gospel of Jesus Christ

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” (*Proverbs 9:10*)

**The Gospel brings the wisdom of God to us,
beginning only AT salvation and IN salvation.**

It is the birthing center of God’s wisdom.

The ONLY way to BEGIN to truly be wise is to gain insight into

**who God is who man is (self-aware) who Christ Jesus is what He did
what that now MEANS for forever and what EVERY INDIVIDUAL *must* do**

believing in Christ to save you from sin/folly repenting following

the human tendency toward foolishness...our great need for more wisdom

**The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Bible makes us
“wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15)**

AND it makes us wiser and wiser in salvation.

“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be **still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will **increase in learning**.” (Proverbs 9:9)**

1) Fear folly.

See it as something “to be avoided at all costs.”

“The woman Folly is **loud; she is **seductive** and **knows nothing**. She sits at the door of her house;**

she takes a seat on the highest places of the town,

calling to those who pass by,

who are going straight on their way, ‘Whoever is **simple, let him turn in here!’**

And to him who **lacks sense she says, ‘Stolen water is sweet,**

and bread eaten in secret is pleasant [pleasure—that kills].

But **he does not know that **the dead are there**,**

that **her guests are in the depths of Sheol.” (Proverbs 9:13-18)**

“flee youthful passions...” (2 Timothy 2:22)

Watch for it in your heart/mind/life choices;

Confess it.

Turn from it.

And know that you will have to live with the earthly consequences of your folly.

2) Cherish/prize/value/love wisdom for living from God.

It brings such blessing! What a gift!

“Blessed** is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, for **the gain** from her is better than gain from silver and **her profit** better than gold.**

****She is more precious than jewels**, and **nothing you desire can compare with her**.**

****Long life** is in her right hand; in her left hand are **riches and honor**. Her ways are**

ways of **pleasantness, and all her paths are **peace**. She is **a tree of life** to those**

who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.”

(Proverbs 3:13-18)

“Get wisdom; get insight; **do not forget**, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. **Do not forsake** her, and she will **keep** you; **love** her, and she will **guard** you. The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. **Prize** her highly, and she will **exalt** you; she will **honor** you if you **embrace** her. She will place on your head **a graceful garland**; she will bestow on you **a beautiful crown**.” (Proverbs 4:5-9)

3) Feel the constant need you have for wisdom—EVERY day! We need to feel an unending desperation for it.

“My son, if you **receive** my words
and **treasure up** my commandments with you, making your ear **attentive** to wisdom
and **inclining your heart** to understanding; yes, if you **call out for** insight
and **raise your voice for** understanding, if you **seek it like silver**
and **search for it as for hidden treasures**, **then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God**.” (Proverbs 2:1-5)

“**Look carefully then how you walk**,
not as **unwise** but as **wise**,
making the best use of the time,
because **the days are evil**.
Therefore **do not be foolish**,
but **understand** what **the will of the Lord** is.” (Ephesians 4:15-17)

4) Realize that the pursuing of wisdom *IS* the pursuing of Christ, for He *IS* wisdom

“But **where shall wisdom be found**?
And **where is the place of understanding**? Man does not know its worth,
and **it is not found in the land of the living**....

“**From where, then, does wisdom come**?
And **where is the place of understanding**? **It is hidden from the eyes of all living**
and concealed from the birds of the air. Abaddon and Death say,
‘We have heard a rumor of it with our ears.’
“**God understands the way to it,**
and he knows its place.” (Job 28:12-13,20-23)

“Christ,
in whom are hidden
all the treasures
of wisdom and knowledge.” (Colossians 2:3)

So wisdom comes to us thru our relationship with Him
by faith through His words to us.

**“The words of the wise heard in quiet
are better than the shouting of a ruler among fools.”** (*Ecclesiastes 9:17*)
The words/wisdom of Christ Jesus heard in quiet
are infinitely better/wiser than the shouting of the flesh, the world, and the devil

To grow wise *IS* to grow in Christ’s nature—
His mind, His word, His will, His power...

**5) When you are given wisdom by God,
do not doubt it’s rightness or waver about living it out.
Apply it—by faith (increasing in that faith) in every situation.**

**“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God,
who gives generously to all without reproach,
and it will be given him.
But let him ask in faith, with no doubting,
for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the
wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the
Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”** (*James 1:5-8*)

**6) Appreciate wisdom.
It, too, is among God’s great, endless gifts to you.
Every time you ask God for wisdom and are given it by Him,
gratitude should fill your heart
And enjoy the blessings wisdom brings you,
as it helps you journey through this trouble-filled life**

Pondering Questions with this text....

*What truths about "five fingers of **folly**" in this text stood out to you Sunday (descriptions, declarations of truth, warnings, principles) and why?*

*What did the Spirit impress on your heart about **wisdom**—particularly about wisdom being found in Christ Jesus and the Gospel?*