

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"SELF CONTROL AND DESIRES" | PROVERBS | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

- What comes to mind with the word "fool"?

"Why Is One Person Wise and Another Foolish?" Proverbs 9:6-8, Proverbs 9:12-13

There are four categories of fools in Proverbs: the stupid fool, the unreasonable fool, the stubborn fool, and the scorning fool.

- Why is it important to remember all forms of foolishness are heart issues and not a matter of intelligence?

"Two Invitations" Proverbs 9:1-18

Wisdom and Folly both call out to people to join them, and their response to both reveal whether they are wise or foolish.

- What are the differences between the path of Folly and the path of Wisdom in Proverbs 9?

"Consequences are Delayed Not Denied. The Path of Wisdom Leads to Light" Proverbs 4: 18-19

Wisdom works slow and seems dim at first but will get brighter, while Folly works fast and is exciting, but will get darker.

- What helps people to avoid the fast, easy route and to follow the slow path of wisdom?

Christ Connection: Jesus is the Way and the Two Responses to Him" Matthew 7:13-14

Jesus taught there was a wide gate that leads to destruction and a narrow gate that leads to life, which was Him. Jesus was greeted on Palm Sunday with praise, but then was rejected and crucified, revealing the people's foolishness.

- What does it mean to follow Jesus and not just admire Jesus?

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Scripture teaches there are two paths, one of wisdom and one of foolishness. Fools live for themselves and seek control. It takes surrendering and trusting God to walk with Jesus, who is the path of Wisdom.

- What have your choices lately revealed about your path?
- What would it look like this week to follow Jesus in your decisions?
- Pray that Jesus would forgive you for when you chose the easy, selfish path and ask for strength to follow Him.

10 - Wisdom vs. Folly

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online **2nd**.
- B. **Slide1-5 Cam**: Holy Week. **Easter Weekend**. Easter Event. **Crosswalk**. **Widows**.
- C. **Slide6 Prayer Mtg**: won't have on Easter.
- D. **Slide7 Prayer**: God you are calling everyone of us to **choose**: which **voice** to listen to. which **path** to walk. *Shape our hearts, guide our steps, and lead us in **Your way**.*

II. Intro: Wisdom vs. Folly

- A. **Slide8 Opening Story**: *Two Doors*. **Imagine** you walk into a room and there are **two doors** in front of you. *Both doors are open. Both are inviting. Both have people walking through them.* (P) Above one door, there's a sign that says: *Easy. Immediate. No cost.* Above the other door, the sign says: *Narrow. Costly. Requires trust.* (P)
 1. Naturally, most people start moving toward **the first door**.
 2. **But here's what you can't see at the entrance**: The **first door** gets **darker** the farther you walk. The **second** door gets **brighter**. (P)
 - a) The problem is - you **can't see** the **end** from the **beginning**. **You only see the invitation**.
- B. Transition to **Proverbs**. That's exactly how Proverbs describes life. *Two voices. Two invitations. Two paths.* - *And both feel right at the start.*
- C. **Palm Sunday**: On the original **Palm Sunday**, a whole crowd stood at that same kind of moment: **two ways** in front of them, **and a choice** to make about **Jesus**.
 1. **The most important decisions in life aren't** obvious at the **entrance**, they're revealed at the **destination**.
- D. **Big Idea**: **Wisdom** and **folly** both invite - **but only one** leads to **Life**.
- E. **Proverbs** says **life is not random and it's not neutral**. Every day, you are walking a **path**. [Not standing still. Not undecided]

1. You are **becoming someone** based on the direction you're walking.
- F. I want to **clarify** something right up front. In the Bible, You're **not a Fool** because you have an **Intellectual deficiency**. No, **a fool is a fool** because he/she has a **Moral deficiency**. [so it's not like *the bumper sticker* that read, "*I took an IQ test and the results were negative.*"]
- G. I want to **clarify**, **a Wise person isn't** one who *knows everything*, or has all the answers. - In the Bible, **a Wise person** fears/is in awe of **The One** who **does know everything**, and **has all the answers**.

III. Slide9a **1 WHY IS ONE PERSON WISE AND ANOTHER FOOLISH?**

A. **Answer:** It is a **heart issue!**

1. Our heart is the center of our life, our "*master control*" that governs the issues of life.

B. Slide9b-f **Four** primary categories emerge for the concept of **Fool in the OT**:¹

1. The **stupid fool** (פְּתִי - pethi), easily persuaded by **flattery** and **gullible** to false teaching. Prov. 9:6 *Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight.*
2. The **unreasonable fool** (אָוִיל - Avil), who **despises wisdom** and is characterized by *excessive talk*.
3. The **stubborn fool** (כְּסִיל - kēsîl), dull and passive, struggling with authority. Prov.9:13 *The woman Folly is loud; she is seductive and knows nothing.*
4. The **scorning fool** (לֵצֵן - Letsz), a scoffer who mocks even Scripture itself. Prov.9:7,8,12

C. A **5th** category, the committed fool (נָבָל nabal - *David's nemesis. 1Sam.25*). Nabal represents one who may have entered **apostasy** (Gk. *defection*). Used in Psalm 14:1 where *the fool declares, There is no God*, combining **immorality with godlessness**.

1. The **distinctions matter theologically**: The **brash fool** differs from the **stupid fool**. The **brash fool** possesses intelligence but lacks wisdom.

¹ R. T. Kendall, In Pursuit of His Wisdom: How to Get God's Opinion on Any Matter (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2015).

2. The fool's problem is fundamentally **not intellectual stupidity** (or unavoidable lack of intelligence) **but rather moral and spiritual failure**. The fool **chooses** foolishness through *willful, imprudent repeated choices*.

D. Proverbs 9 gives us **Two Invitations**. 2 voices calling out. 2 Ways/Paths/Roads. 2 Responses. 2 Outcomes. (I want you to meet **2 women** to help us w/this)

IV. Slide 10 **2 TWO INVITATIONS** (WISDOM VS FOLLY) 2 voices calling out

A. Proverbs 9 - Wisdom and Folly offer competing feasts.

1. In the first section, **Lady Wisdom** prepares for a feast (1-6). She sets the table and sends out women to invite **the simple people** (Heb, *pethi*, refers to someone who is *naïve and gullible, ignorant and oblivious*).

Unlike the **fool** (lacks good judgment), **a simple person** has the ability to learn.

a) The invitation to wisdom is not based on what **you have**, It's based on what a person recognizes **they lack**. *To the simple wisdom calls out.*

2. In the middle section, Wisdom then **Compares the Reactions** of **the scoffer and the wise** to *reproof and instruction* (7-12).

a) Your response to the wisdom of God reveals the kind of person you are. **Wise or foolish.**

3. The final section (13-18) **parallels the first**, as **Lady Folly** prepares a feast. She **loudly calls** to whomever passes by, inviting **the simple people**, who unknowingly enter **the realm of the dead**.

a) You are being **formed** you into *one of two* different kinds of people.

B. Slide 11 Read and *running commentary* on Proverbs 9.

1. They're saying the same thing. There are 2 competing voices in this world. **Not just for your attention, but for your allegiance.**

C. Both **Lady Wisdom & Lady Folly** prepares a feast and calls out.

D. **Lady Folly** (13-18) also calls out - loud, seductive, easy.

1. **Folly** doesn't sound **evil** - it sounds **easy**.

2. **But the dangerous path** rarely introduces itself as **dangerous**.

a) I went from studying to my **PT** Fri. At the end I sit with **TENS/Ice** for 10 min, Bon Jovi's song came on the TV w/words I was staring at, "*You Give Love a Bad Name*". (I thought Wow, Bon Jovi was singing to *This Woman of Folly*).

(1) Shot through the heart, and you're to blame. - Darlin', you give love a bad name. - An angel's smile is what you sell. - You promised me heaven, then put me through **hell**. - Chains of love got a hold on me. *When passion's a prison, you can't break free.*

E. **Insight:** **Both** voices are **inviting**. **Both** sound **appealing**. *That's important!*

1. **Folly offers:** Immediacy. Secrecy. Ease. Excitement.

2. **Wisdom offers:** Depth. Growth. Discipline. Long-term life. **But ...**

F. **Folly** says, *This will feel good now*. **Wisdom** says, *This will lead to life later*.

V. Slide12a **3 CONSEQUENCES ARE DELAYED, NOT DENIED**

A. **Wisdom** calls out - **but many ignore it**. *Why? Because consequences aren't immediate*.

1. **Slide12b** Later Solomon writes (Eccl.8:11NLT) *When a crime is not punished quickly, people feel it is safe to do wrong*. [because **justice** is not **immediate**, people are *bold and to sin*, assuming they'll *get away w/it*].

B. **Folly** works **fast**. **Wisdom** works **slow**.

1. **But:** Just because **consequences** are **delayed** **doesn't mean** they are **denied**.

C. **Illustration:** Seeds: Plant today - Harvest later. [every decision is *planting something*].

VI. Slide13 **4 THE PATH OF WISDOM LEADS TO LIGHT**

A. Proverbs 4:18-19 *But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn (the morning sun), which shines brighter and brighter until full day (noon). 19 The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know - over what they stumble*.

1. Contrast: Wisdom → brighter. Folly → darker.

2. **Wisdom** may start **dim** - **but** it gets **brighter**.

3. **Folly** may start **exciting** - **but** it gets **darker**.

a) You don't notice **darkness** all at once - it happens gradually.

VII.Slide14a **5 PALM SUNDAY: TWO RESPONSES TO JESUS** *our bridge*

A. On Palm Sunday: Jesus enters Jerusalem. The crowd shouts, "*Hosanna!*" They welcome Him as King.

1. *At the same time*, some *turn away*, some *stay silent*, some *call for His crucifixion*. - *In the same city ...* some shouted, '*Hosanna*' while others shouted, '*Crucify Him.*'

a) *Why?* Because they wanted: A Savior of convenience. *Not a Lord to follow.*

B. Slide14b *2 ways to live*: were standing in front of them & they chose *the wrong one*

VIII.Slide15a **6 CHRIST CONNECTION: JESUS IS THE WAY**

A. Jesus doesn't just teach the way of wisdom, He is *The Way*. [Jn14:6 *I am the way ...*]

1. As Proverbs shows 2 paths: Jesus says, *I Am the Path!*

2. So *the narrow way* is not just *a harder way*, *it's a Person*.

B. Slide15b Jesus laid out the same 2 paths in Mt.7:13,14: *Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*

1. There's the decision ... In your life, you'll *choose* to live the way **God** has designed. **OR** you will *choose* to live in the way of **Folly**, doing whatever your body wants, *despite the cost - ignoring the cost*.

2. **So** the way you respond to this, reveals *the kind of person* that you are.

C. Slide16 **CLOSING**

D. At the beginning of this message, I asked you to picture 2 doors. *Both open. Both inviting. Both leading somewhere.*

1. What **Proverbs** tells us is that those 2 doors are *not just an idea*. *They show up in real life.* (P)

- E. **On Palm Sun**, the people of Jerusalem were standing in front of those same **2 doors**:
1. **One door** was **The Way of Jesus**: *humility. surrender. a King on a donkey. a path that would lead to a cross.* The other door was **the way they expected**: *power. control. comfort. a Messiah who would serve their agenda.*
 - a) They chose the door that *felt right* in the moment. *They waved palm branches, but they didn't follow the path.*
- F. **And here's the truth** those same **2 doors** are still in front of **us today!**
1. *Wisdom or folly. Surrender or self. Trust or control.*
 2. And just like before: *both are still open. both are still inviting.*
- G. **But now** we know something we **didn't** know at the **beginning** ...
1. We know where the doors lead. *One leads to life. One leads to regret, darkness, and loss.*
- H. Let's Remember. **Jesus** didn't just point to the right door, He walked through it first.
1. *Through suffering. Through the cross. Into resurrection life.*
 2. **And today He** stands before us and says, *Follow Me.*
- I. **Hey this year let's not just celebrate Easter** - *Let's* arrive there together, having walked the road that Jesus walked for us. *Join us this week during Holy Week!*
1. You don't have to come to everything, **but** even choosing a few nights could *deeply shape* your Easter experience.
 2. *Let's* not just **admire Jesus** at the entrance of the door.
Let's Choose the path - Walk the way - Follow the King.
 3. **Because** the **door** you **choose**, becomes *the life you live!*
 4. *I choose the Jesus way!*
- J. **Prayer:**
- K. **Keywords:** wisdom, folly, paths.