

Proverbs 26 — Foolishness, Laziness, and the Destructive Power of Words

I. The Folly of Fools — Proverbs 26:1–12

A. Honor does not belong to a fool — vv. 1–2

- **v. 1** — Honor given to a fool is as inappropriate as snow in summer or rain during harvest.
- **v. 2** — An undeserved curse does not have to become reality.

***Don't give inappropriate honor or weight to foolish words.**

B. Fools require correction — vv. 3–5

- **v. 3** — A fool may need a rod of correction.
- **v. 4** — Don't answer a fool **according to his foolishness** and become like him.
- **v. 5** — At times, answer a fool **according to his foolishness** so his error becomes evident. ***There is a time to not engage foolishness and a time to expose it.**

C. The danger of trusting a fool — vv. 6–10

- **v. 6** — Using a fool as your messenger can bring trouble.
- **v. 7** — Wisdom in the mouth of a fool is useless.
- **v. 8** — Giving honor to a fool is like putting a stone in a sling.
- **v. 9** — A proverb in a fool's mouth can become dangerous.
- **v. 10** — Hiring or empowering fools creates unnecessary problems.

D. The fool keeps returning to foolishness — vv. 11–12

- **v. 11** — A fool repeatedly returns to his folly like a dog returning to its vomit.
- **v. 12** — A person who is wise in his own eyes may be worse off than a fool.

***Pride can be more dangerous than ignorance because it prevents correction.**

II. The Folly of Laziness — Proverbs 26:13–16

A. The lazy person creates excuses — v. 13: "There is a lion in the road!" ***Fear becomes an excuse for inaction.**

B. The lazy person goes nowhere — v. 14: Like a door turning on its hinges, the sluggard moves but doesn't actually go anywhere.

C. The lazy person avoids responsibility — v. 15: Even when opportunity is within reach, he is unwilling to act.

D. The lazy person thinks he is wise — v. 16

- The sluggard considers himself wiser than seven people who can answer intelligently. ***Laziness often disguises itself as wisdom through excuses and rationalization.**

III. The Folly of Meddling — Proverbs 26:17–22

A. Don't involve yourself in unnecessary conflicts — v. 17. Grabbing a dog by the ears is a picture of someone who interferes in another person's quarrel.

B. Deception can hurt others — vv. 18–19. A person may deceive or hurt someone and then claim, **"I was only joking."**

*Calling something a joke doesn't remove responsibility for the damage it causes.

C. Gossip fuels conflict — vv. 20–22

- **v. 20** — Without wood, a fire goes out; without gossip, conflict dies down.
- **v. 21** — A contentious person continually adds fuel to conflict.
- **v. 22** — Gossip is attractive but penetrates deeply. ***Gossip is fuel for relational fires.**

IV. The Deceptiveness of Evil Speech — Proverbs 26:23–28

A. Attractive words can hide an evil heart — vv. 23–25

- **v. 23** — Beautiful words can conceal a corrupt heart.
- **v. 24** — A hateful person may disguise his true intentions.
- **v. 25** — Don't automatically believe flattering or deceptive speech.

B. Hidden evil eventually becomes exposed — v. 26: What is concealed in the heart will eventually be revealed.

C. Evil often returns upon the evildoer — v. 27: The person who digs a pit may fall into it.

- The person who rolls a stone may have it roll back on him.

D. Lies and flattery destroy relationships — v. 28: A lying tongue hates those it harms.

- Flattery causes ruin.