

If the iron is blunt, and on does not sharpen the edge, he must use more strength, but wisdom helps one to succeed.
(Ecclesiastes 10:10)

I. Don't Be a Fool (vv.1-3)

- a. The word *folly*, which means to behave foolishly, is used nine times in this chapter. Wise people will stay away from foolishness.
- b. Why is one person foolish and another wise? It all depends on the inclinations of the heart. (v.2)
- c. Since the fool does not have wisdom in their heart, they gravitate toward wrong (the left). (v.2)
- d. The wise do not have time for foolishness. Why? Because they are doing wise things.
- e. A fool is a person who refuses to listen to correction or wisdom. (Psalm 14:1)
- f. We should not call anyone a fool with unrighteous anger. (Matthew 5:22)

II. There Are Fools Among Us (vv.4-20)

- a. Foolishness in high places (vv.4-7). If there is one person who needs wisdom, it is the leader of the nation. If the ruler is proud, they may say and do foolish things that cause them to lose respect. (v.4)
 1. The best leaders are those who are tough-minded but tenderhearted. They have a clear plan, but listen to wisdom from those around them. (Pro 15:22-23)
 2. Immaturity in a leader is a recipe for disaster (vv.16-20). If the king is immature, the people around him will reflect that immaturity.
 3. Spiritual maturity is reached by obedience to the will of God and not by the passing of years.
- b. Foolishness in action (vv.8-11). Solomon describes people who attempted to do their work, but suffered because they were foolish. *Haman* was hanged on the gallows he had built for *Mordecai*.
 1. One man dug a pit for a purpose, but fell into because he failed to take proper precautions. Another man tried to split wood with a dull axe.
 2. How many of us have entered Christ's service, exhausting ourselves because we did not regularly sharpen our axes in His presence. (Isa 40:29-31)
 3. The wise worker will pause and ask, "Is there a better way?" ("Work smarter, not harder")
- c. Foolish talkers (vv.12-15). Talk is the test of wisdom. The wise person will speak gracious words appropriate to the listener (Pro 10:32; 25:11).
 1. The fool uses words without thinking. We are to use the right words at the right time. (Isa 50:4)
 2. Foolish people boast about future plans as if they are in control.
- d. Verse 19 is difficult to translate and interpret. However, this is a trusted meaning, "If we don't have enough money we will not be able to enjoy the basic pleasures of life."

III. Thoughts and Considerations for Action

- a. According to Solomon's analysis, foolish people tend to go it alone. Even if they are around other people they do not listen. The foolish act without thinking of consequences.
- b. In contrast, wise people tend to think with the end in mind giving consideration to their actions. Wise people listen and they tend to know what they do not know.
- c. "A foolish act can undo what much wisdom has been able to accomplish."
- d. As believers, we prove the wisdom of God in our salvation, sanctification and redemption. (Read 1 Cor 1:26-30) To know these three is to be truly wise.
 1. The "message of the cross is foolishness to the world. How could the all-conquering Messiah, *he who is to come*, end His days hanging on a tree?