02 – THE FOOL, THE SCOFFER & THE WISE

✓ The first person we looked at in Proverbs was the "simple" man. Simple doesn't mean "slow" or "stupid". It means, "young, naïve, innocent, without much life experience".

✓ Really, the simple man is at cross-roads. He can go any number of directions in life. Where he goes depends, in part, on who's influencing him.

1 Cor. 15:33 – "Be not deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals."

✓ Notice how he starts the thought: "Be not deceived". Meaning: If you think you can keep "bad company" and not be corrupted morally; you're deceiving yourself. It's spiritual law, you become like the people you associate with.

Proverbs 22:24 – "Don't make friends with an angry man, and don't associate with hot-tempered people; lest you learn their ways and entangle your soul." (Sooner or later, you'll pick up their behavior.)

✓ Here are two individuals that simple people would do well to avoid:

2.) The Fool – (Mentioned 75 times in Proverbs)

a.) He Thinks He's Always Right

Prov. 12:15 – "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes."

✓ You've heard of girls "looking for Mr. Right". Well, this is "Mr. I'm *Always* Right". (That seems to be the foundation of his personality. He's reckless and overconfident – Prov. 14:16 ISV.)

b.) He Despises Wisdom and Instruction – (Prov. 1:7)

Prov. 12:15 (TLB) – "A fool thinks he needs no advice."

✓ The fool doesn't *want* input! He sees input as interference rather than help.

c.) He Doesn't Even Want God's Input

Psalm 14:1 – "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

✓ That's not a *wrong* translation of this verse. But there might be a better way to look at it. (Notice the phrase *"there is"*, is in italics.) Whenever you see a word in italics, it means that word wasn't there in the original. (It was added by the translators to help clarify the meaning. Sometimes it helps; and sometimes it doesn't.)

✓ The original reads this way: "The fool has said in his heart, 'No God!'" (God says, "Live right!" He says, "No". God says, "Love your enemies", and he says, "No way, God".) Here's a way you can always identify a fool. He has no trouble saying "No" to God!

✓ Here are a few more characteristics: He Laughs at Sin (14:9), He's Quick-Tempered (12:16), He Does Mischief for Fun (10:23), He has a Perverted Mouth (19:1), The Idea of Repentance is Repulsive to Him (13:19), and He Causes His Mother Shame & Heartache (10:1).

✓ Definition: The fool lives life on his own terms. He's impulsive, self-confident, resists correction, and believes he's always right. He has no problem saying no to godly counsel, even when it comes from God Himself.

3.) The Scoffer / Scorner / Mocker – (Mentioned 13 times)

✓ The Scoffer shares a lot of characteristics with the fool; but he takes it to another level.

✓ The scoffer doesn't just *reject* wisdom; he openly *mocks* it. There's a disdain in his heart for God and His Word. Once a person reaches that point, he's difficult to reach.

Things He Has in Common with the Fool

a.) Like the Fool, The Scoffer is Arrogant

Proverbs 21:24 – "Scoffer is the name of the arrogant, conceited man who thinks much too highly of himself."

b.) Like the Fool, He's Unteachable

Prov.13:1 – "A scoffer doesn't listen to correction (rebuke)."

✓ This Is Interesting: The Bible specifically tells us *not* to rebuke a scoffer (Prov. 9:8). Why? There's no point. He's not open to correction – at all. (It's like in the Old Testament. God said, "Ephraim is joined to his idols: leave him alone." Hosea 4:17.) People can reach a place spiritually where it takes an act of God to reach them. It's that way with the scoffer. *God* may be able to reach the scoffer; but *you* can't. If *you* try to correct him, he'll just hate you.

The Scoffer's Mission

✓ Scoffers aren't content to reject God quietly. They're not content to just disagree with you. They've got to mock you!

c.) He Actually Enjoys Mocking Righteousness

Prov. 1:22 – "Scoffers delight in their scoffing." ("Find joy")

✓ They're happiest when they're mocking God or trying to shake someone's faith.

d.) Scoffers Stir People Up – (Doubt / Strife)

Prov. 29:8 – "Scoffers set a city afire [inflaming the minds of the people] …" (AMP)" "Mockers can get a whole town agitated …" (NLT)

e.) The Only Way to Calm Things Down is to Make Him to Leave.

Prov. 22:10 – "Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out."

f.) When a Scoffer Faces Consequences, Simple People Learn

Prov. 19:25 – "Beat a scoffer and the simple learn a lesson."

✓ Don't misunderstand. That's not telling you to go and "beat up" on scoffers. It's referring to consequences. When life "beats up" the scoffer, the simple take notice. (Here's the point I want you to get. It didn't say the *scoffer* would learn anything! He probably won't. But when the simple people around him see it, *they* learn.)

✓ Scoffers make terrible friends. Whether they're mocking the Bible or spreading strife, don't be deceived. It *will* affect you.

4.) The Wise Man

✓ This is where you want to get your friends from – (Prov. 13:20)

a.) He Fears (Respects) the Lord

Prov. 9:10 – "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

✓ Where did he get the wisdom? It began with the fear of the Lord.

b.) He's Teachable

Prov. 9:9 – "Reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser."

Prov. 1:5 – "A wise man will listen, and will increase learning."

Prov. 13:1 – "A wise son listens to his father's instruction ..."

- ✓ A wise man never thinks that he's "arrived". He knows he can go higher. He listens, he learns, and he keeps growing.

c.) He Controls His Emotions

Prov. 14:29 – *"He that is slow to wrath, is of great wisdom."*

d.) He Thinks (Looks) Ahead

Prov. 14:8 – *"The wise man looks ahead."* (He wants to know where his path will lead.)

e.) He Runs from Evil

Proverbs 14:16 - *"A wise person fears and turns away from evil."*

f.) He's Humble and His Words Build People Up – (Prov. 11:2)

Prov. 12:18 – *"The tongue of the wise brings healing."*

The Wise Man In a Nutshell

- ✓ His heart is anchored in the fear of the Lord.
- ✓ His mind is teachable.
- ✓ His tongue is restrained and life-giving.
- ✓ His emotions are under control.
- ✓ His decisions are thoughtful and righteous.
- ✓ His life leaves a legacy that others can build on.

- ✓ That's what you want "rubbing off" on you.