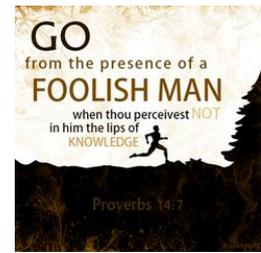


7 TRAITS OF A FOOL'S PROFILE

“Go from the presence of a foolish man...” (Proverbs 14:7).



Introduction

1. If we are to go from the presence of a foolish man, then it is essential to be able to identify him. We don't have to guess or judge for ourselves who is the foolish man because the scriptures provide us with many traits that make up the profile of a fool.
2. A fool can say and do wise things and a wise man can say and do foolish things. The difference is in what characterizes his walk or lifestyle. Whether one is wise or a fool is a choice; each person chooses whether or not to pursue wisdom or remain a fool.
3. There are many traits of a fool, but in this lesson we shall focus on just seven. A fool will probably not possess every single one of the following traits, but if he is truly a fool, he will possess several of them.

1. A Fool's Character

With low moral standards, a fool's character is always lacking.

- a. A fool is corrupt (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

“The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good” (Psalms 14:1).

- b. A fool obtains by unjust means (Jeremiah 17:11) and deception (Proverbs 14:8).

“As a partridge that broods but does not hatch, so is he who gets riches, but not by right; it will leave him in the midst of his days, and at his end he will be a fool” (Jeremiah 17:11).

- c. A fool's deeds and ways are vile (Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

“The fool has said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; their deeds are vile; there is none who does good” (Psalms 53:1).

- d. A fool is rebellious (Psalm 107:17).

“Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities” (Psalms 107:17).

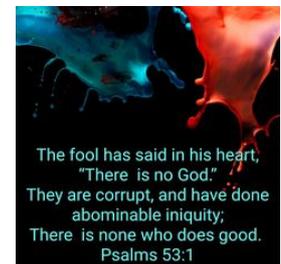
- e. A fool practices ungodliness (Isaiah 32:6). He does not shun evil (Proverbs 14:16); a fool detests turning from evil (Proverbs 13:19). In fact, he finds pleasure in evil conduct (Proverbs 10:23) - so much so that his mind is busy with evil (Isaiah 32:6). A fool is skilled in doing evil and does not know how to do good:

“For My people are foolish, they have not known Me. They are silly children, and they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” (Jeremiah 4:22).

2. A Fool's Understanding

A fool has no understanding or knowledge; he sees no value in them and chooses not to pursue them.

- a. A fool finds no pleasure in understanding (Proverbs 18:2). He is classified as a senseless child and has no understanding (Jeremiah 4:22). He is one who has eyes but does not see and ears but does not hear (Jeremiah 5:21). He does not give thought to his ways (Proverbs 14:8).



- b. A fool does not keep wisdom in view (**Proverbs 17:24**), does not delight in wisdom (**Proverbs 10:23**), and does not walk with the wise (**Proverbs 13:20**). In fact, a fool despises wisdom (**Proverbs 1:7**). Wisdom is too high for him (**Proverbs 24:7**). Instead of walking in wisdom, he trusts in himself (**Proverbs 28:26**).

“He who trusts in himself is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered” (**Proverbs 28:26**).

- c. A fool has no knowledge on his lips (**Proverbs 14:7**), does not store up knowledge (**Proverbs 10:14**), does not seek knowledge (**Proverbs 15:14**), and does not commend knowledge (**Proverbs 15:2**). Not surprisingly, a fool hates knowledge (**Proverbs 1:22**).

“How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorers delight in their scoring, and fools hate knowledge” (**Proverbs 1:22**).

- d. A fool's way seems right to him; he does not listen to advice (**Proverbs 12:15**). He scorns the wisdom of another's words (**Proverbs 23:9**). He does not know how to take warning (**Ecclesiastes 4:13**). Even as he walks along the road, he lacks sense and shows everyone how foolish he is (**Ecclesiastes 10:3**).

“Even as fools walk along the road, they lack sense and show everyone how stupid they are” (**Ecclesiastes 10:3**).

3. A Fool's Behavior

A fool's behavior can be and often is quite shocking and reprehensible.

- a. A fool's mouth never fails to get him into trouble. Many words are the mark of a fool (**Ecclesiastes 5:3**); he multiplies words (**Ecclesiastes 10:14**). A fool's words are not gracious (**Ecclesiastes 10:12**), and his lips do not nourish others (**Proverbs 10:21**). His mouth invites ruin (**Proverbs 10:14**). He spreads slander (**Proverbs 10:18**). Even worse, he spreads error concerning the Lord (**Isaiah 32:6**).

Too many worries lead to nightmares, and a fool is known from talking too much.

Ecclesiastes 5:3

“For fools speak folly, their hearts are bent on evil: they practice ungodliness and spread error concerning the LORD...” (**Isaiah 32:6**).

- b. A fool devours all he has rather than storing provisions (**Proverbs 21:20**). His eyes wander to the ends of the earth (**Proverbs 17:24**), and his heart is in the house of pleasure (**Ecclesiastes 7:4**).

“The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get” (**Proverbs 21:20**).

- c. A fool delights in airing his own opinions (**Proverbs 18:2**). His mouth feeds on folly (**Proverbs 15:14**). He speaks folly (**Isaiah 32:6**), his heart blurts out folly (**Proverbs 12:23**), and his mouth gushes folly (**Proverbs 15:2**). A proverb in his mouth is like a lame man's legs that hang limp (**Proverbs 26:7**) or like a thorn bush in a drunkard's hand (**Proverbs 26:9**).

“Instead of saving up your excess income for a “rainy day”, you spend it on your desires and pleasures. That’s your choice, but who will you expect to bail you out when that “rainy day” comes? We expect such behavior from worldly people, but we expect something better of Christians, don’t we?”

- Nuggets of Truth and Wisdom, Vol. IV, #83.

“Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions” (**Proverbs 18:2**).

- d. A fool has anger residing in his lap or bosom (**Ecclesiastes 7:9**). He does not overlook an insult (**Proverbs 12:16**) and does not avoid strife (**Proverbs 20:3**). He shows his annoyance at once (**Proverbs 12:16**) and gives full vent to his anger (**Proverbs 29:11**). He is quick tempered (**Proverbs 14:17**), hotheaded and reckless (**Proverbs 14:16**), and is quick to quarrel (**Proverbs 20:3**).

“It is to one's honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel” (**Proverbs 20:3**).

- e. A fool exposes his folly (**Proverbs 13:16**), and he repeats his folly as a dog returns to its vomit (**Proverbs 26:11**). Indeed, his folly yields more folly (**Proverbs 14:24**). His folly cannot be removed from him even if he were ground in a mortar with a pestle (**Proverbs 27:22**).

“Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his foolishness will not depart from him” (**Proverbs 27:22**).

4. A Fool's Relationship With Others

Any relationship with a fool will certainly be strained at best. Why?

- a. A fool exalts himself (**Proverbs 30:32**), and he harbors resentment (**Job 5:2**). He neither accepts commands (**Proverbs 10:8**) nor heeds correction (**Proverbs 15:5**). In fact, he despises discipline (**Proverbs 1:7**). He leaves the hungry empty and withholds water from the thirsty (**Isaiah 32:6**).
- b. It is the people in the fool's environment that suffer the most. A fool despises and brings grief and bitterness to his mother (**Proverbs 15:20; Proverbs 10:1; Proverbs 17:25**) and despises his father's discipline (**Proverbs 15:5**). He eliminates joy for his father (**Proverbs 17:21**), and brings grief to his father (**Proverbs 17:21, 25**). In fact, he is his father's ruin (**Proverbs 19:13**). The companion of a fool suffers harm (**Proverbs 13:20**), for a fool tears her house down with her own hands (**Proverbs 14:1**).
- c. Hiring a fool is like an archer who wounds at random (**Proverbs 26:10**). And sending a message by his hand is like cutting off one's feet or drinking violence (**Proverbs 26:6**). The earth trembles under a fool who is full of food (**Proverbs 30:21-22**).
- d. There's no good way to deal with a fool. If you answer him according to his folly, you'll be like him yourself; if you don't answer him according to his folly, he'll be wise in his own eyes (**Proverbs 26:4-5**). In other words, when dealing with a fool, you can't win for losing. It's better to heed a wise man's rebuke than to listen to a fool's song (**Ecclesiastes 7:5**).
- e. Provocation by a fool is heavier than both stone and sand (**Proverbs 27:3**). And when engaged in a controversy, he rages and scoffs and there is no peace (**Proverbs 29:9**).
- f. If all of the above isn't scary enough to deter one from dealing with a fool, this ought to do it: it's better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool in his folly (**Proverbs 17:12**). Can you imagine coming face to face with an angry mother bear set on vengeance for her cubs? According to God's Word, a fool in his folly is worse!

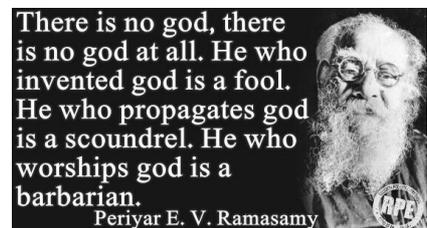


Any relationship with a fool will certainly be strained at best.

5. A Fool's Relationship With God

A fool may be religious and think he has a relationship with God (usually on his own terms) or, alternatively, he may completely reject any notion of God.

- a. A fool has a heart which inclines to the left (**Ecclesiastes 10:2**). A heart that is inclined to the right describes one that walks in wisdom and pursues godliness. A heart that inclines to the left describes one that walks in foolishness; following every fleshly impulse.
- b. A fool accepts good from God but not trouble (**Job 2:10**). He mocks at making amends for sin (**Proverbs 14:9**). He does not fear the Lord (**Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 14:16**), and he does not put God's words into practice even if he hears them (**Matthew 7:26**). He does not keep the command God gave him (**1 Samuel 13:13**), and doesn't know the way of the Lord, the requirements of God (**Jeremiah 5:4**). He does not guard his steps when worshipping God and therefore does not know he does wrong when he makes a sacrifice (**Ecclesiastes 5:1**). He does not fulfill his vow to God and therefore God has no pleasure in him (**Ecclesiastes 5:4**).
- c. A fool does not know the Lord (**Jeremiah 4:22**). He says in his heart, “There is no God” (**Psalms 14:1; Psalm 53:1**). He reviles God's name (**Psalms 74:18**) and mocks God all day long (**Psalms 74:22**).
- d. In summary, a fool doesn't have a real relationship with God at all.

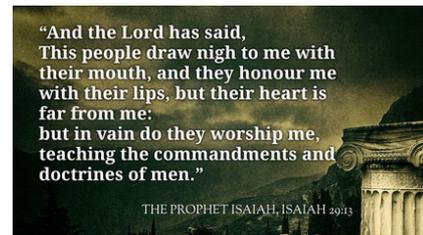


6. A Fool Offers Vain Worship

There are fools that attend worship!

“Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for **they do not know that they are doing evil**” (Ecclesiastes 5:1).

- a. There are fools that are very religious, but because they refuse to pursue knowledge (Proverbs 1:22; 15:14) and wisdom (Proverbs 17:16; 18:2; 24:7), and receive counsel (Proverbs 1:7) and correction, there are aspects of their lifestyle that are sinful, and they have a faulty concept of worship that renders their own worship vain. The bottom line: they are walking in a way that seems right to them (Proverbs 12:15; 28:26).
- b. A fool is without understanding and so they may be engaged in the following without knowing it (it is, though, a willful ignorance): (i) Lifestyle: never stops talking (Ecclesiastes 5:3; 10:14), gossip and slander (Proverbs 10:18); opinionated (Proverbs 29:11) and contentious (Proverbs 14:6); outbursts of anger (Proverbs 12:16; Ecclesiastes 7:9); troubles own house (Proverbs 11:29); self-willed (Proverbs 12:15; 28:26), reckless and careless (Proverbs 14:16). This kind of lifestyle makes one's worship vain (cp. Jeremiah 7:1-11). The thing is, the fool does not know that he does evil (Ecclesiastes 5:1). (ii) In services: not seeking knowledge (Proverbs 1:22), wisdom (Proverbs 23:9; 24:7), understanding or instruction (Proverbs 1:7) – hence falls asleep in services¹, and is forever learning but not coming to a knowledge of the truth (cp. 2 Timothy 3:7).
- c. Some attend services because they have an insatiable desire to socialize, and they will often attend congregations that engage in unscriptural practices to satisfy their craving. Again, though, their own foolishness blinds them to their wrong doing.



7. The Outcome Of A Fool

The consequences of being a fool are anything but good.

- a. The consequences of being a fool:
 - 1) A fool's lips bring him strife (Proverbs 18:6). He is held up to shame (Proverbs 3:35). He suffers affliction because of his iniquities (Psalm 107:17).
 - 2) A fool's folly brings punishment (Proverbs 16:22). His talk brings a rod to his back (Proverbs 14:3), and his mouth invites a beating (Proverbs 18:6). Beatings and a rod are prepared for his back (Proverbs 19:29; 26:3).
 - 3) Since he has no desire to get wisdom, money is of no use in a fool's hand (Proverbs 17:16). It's not fitting for him to live in luxury (Proverbs 19:10). He gains riches by unjust means only to lose them and be proven a fool (Jeremiah 17:11). He will be servant to the wise (Proverbs 11:29).
 - 4) A fool does not inherit honor (Proverbs 3:35). Honor is not fitting for him (Proverbs 26:1). In fact, giving honor to a fool is like tying a stone in a sling (Proverbs 26:8).
 - 5) A fool's mouth is his undoing (Proverbs 18:7). He is consumed by his own lips (Ecclesiastes 10:12). He folds his hands and ruins himself (Ecclesiastes 4:5). His complacency will destroy him (Proverbs 1:32). He comes to ruin (Proverbs 10:8, 10).
 - 6) A fool dies for lack of judgment (Proverbs 10:21). He dies before his time (Ecclesiastes 7:17). He perishes and leaves his wealth to others (Psalm 49:10; Luke 12:20).
 - 7) A fool's lips are a snare to his soul (Proverbs 18:7). He does not understand that though the wicked spring up like grass and all evildoers flourish, they will be forever destroyed (Psalm 92:6-7). He will not walk in the Way of Holiness (Isaiah 35:8), and he is unprepared for the Lord's return (Matthew 25:1-13).
- b. Strife, shame, affliction, punishment, loss of wealth, loss of comfort, loss of position, loss of respect, ruin, physical death, and spiritual death... those are outcomes anyone should wish to avoid.



¹ Which is a sign of disdain for instruction and disrespect for the teacher.

Conclusion

1. Fools are a source of grief to themselves and everyone around them. They leave a trail of heartache and destruction behind them.
2. Do you exhibit any of the above traits of a fool? You don't have to. You have a choice. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (**James 1:5**). If you are seeking wisdom, then you will find it in God's Word.

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