

Proverbs Week #126 (12:15)

"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel." (Proverbs 12:15 NAS95)

I want to start today's lesson with a short review. When we first started studying Proverbs we defined different types of fools and what it meant to be wise. The four types of fools need to listen to the call of Wisdom. Their foolish behavior is not all the same when considering them in relationship to God. The first one is the *peti* or naïve one. While this one is open to learning, the problem is that he wants to stay simple. As we listen to Wisdom we mature and become wise. We do not have to remain naïve. The second type of fool in the book of Proverbs is the scoffer. This one is proud and enjoys mocking God and His truth; they think it is fun! The Hebrew word *leits* is found fourteen times in the book of Proverbs. Nine of these fourteen times the highlighted characteristic of the scoffer is his rejection of reproof or discipline. The final two words for fool are similar. The *eyvil* and the *ch'sil* are marked by their hatred for God's wisdom. When Wisdom calls out in the streets, these hardened (or fat) fools might express their hatred to God's knowledge by becoming angry and even fighting back.

The Hebrew word for fool in our verse above is *eyvil*. This fool considers everything they do to be good. In contrast, a wise person will be open to listening to the counsel of others. The phrase "right in his own eyes" reminds me of the condition of God's people in the book of Judges. Like Israel before they had a king, we often forget to remember our King and His kingdom standards. What seems to mark the difference between the fool and the wise person here is their focus. One is too focused on their ideas and unwilling to consider other's inputs.

The wise person sees other's counsel as valuable and is willing to listen. Wisdom is more than just knowing things. Wise people demonstrate their wisdom by what they do. A carpenter who is wise makes beautiful things with wood. A seamstress shows her wisdom in the beautiful things she sews. The wisdom taught in the bible is a moral wisdom. Those who have learned to be wise are skilled in areas of life like proper speech, fairness in dealing with others, and are open to continue to learn. They do not call themselves wise and are not wise in their own eyes.

"Therefore if there is any encouragement in the Messiah, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:1-4 NAS95)

The apostle Paul compels us in these words to look to the Messiah and His love as we consider our friends and family. As a teacher he wanted his students to share in his joy by being so close to one another that they would share the same mind and same kind of love. Being wise, we learn to focus our minds on those things that bring about God's purposes. "Intent on one purpose" relates to our focus in life. Here the focus is to be humble in mind towards others and to have a shared view of whose interests are important. As God's family, each of us should look to His kingly rule and consider how we act towards our brothers and sisters. In Messiah, our ways should be consistent with His standards and not just do things that seem right in our own eyes.