

WISE? SIMPLE? FOOL?

What is the number one objective in the Christian life? Is it to win souls? Is it to pray? Is it to learn the Bible? Proverbs 4:7 says: *“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”*

A Christian’s main objective is to **GET WISDOM!** Wisdom is the perfection of common sense. It is to know one’s self, one’s God, one’s neighbor, and properly be able to relate to each. **Wisdom is the ability to tap God’s mind.**

There are three basic characters in life that you will meet as you read Proverbs. They are the wise, simple, and fool. Who you spend time with and who you listen to will determine what you become.

WISE

SIMPLE

FOOL

WHY DO I NEED WISDOM?

Wisdom is seeing things from God’s viewpoint. Without wisdom your effectiveness for God will not be great. You will incur “reproofs of life” unnecessarily. (See Proverbs 1) Many trials people face are self inflicted. Every Christian needs wisdom. We need it in soulwinning, in business, in overcoming temptations, in friendships, in making decisions, and in child rearing. A Christian without wisdom is like a desert without sand, an ocean without water, a bird without wings, and a church without a Bible.

1 Kings Chapter 3 gives the account of a young man who would soon become King of a great nation. He dreamt one night that God would grant him any request he asked for. In the dream he did not ask for riches, long life, or the lives of his enemies - he asked for WISDOM! God granted him his wisdom! His name was Solomon. He is, to this day, known as the wisest man in the world. People traveled great distances to have their questions answered by him. People are drawn to someone who has the answers. People in this world need you to be wise.

RESULTS OF WISDOM

UNDERSTANDING

Proverbs 2:9 says: *“Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.”*

DELIVERANCE FROM EVIL PEOPLE

Proverbs 2:12 says: *“To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things;”*

HAPPINESS

Proverbs 3:13 says: *“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding:”*

LONG LIFE AND RICHES

Proverbs 3:16 says: *“Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.”*

WILL NOT STUMBLE

Proverbs 3:23 says: *“Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.”*

LACK OF FEAR

Proverbs 3:24 says: *"When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet."*

PROMOTION

Proverbs 4:8 says: *"Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee honor, when thou dost embrace her."*

CROWN OF GLORY

Proverbs 4:9 says: *"She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."*

RICHES AND HONOR

Proverbs 8:18 says: *"Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness."*

GLAD PARENTS

Proverbs 10:1 says: *"The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."*

LEADER'S FAVOR

Proverbs 14:28 says: *"In the multitude of people is the king's honor: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince."*

MORE ACCOMPLISHED WITH LESS EFFORT

Ecclesiastes 10:10 says: *"If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct."*

**HOW TO RECOGNIZE A WISE PERSON
WILL HEAR**

Proverbs 1:5 says: *"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:"*

HARD WORKER

Proverbs 10:5 says: *"He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame."*

RECEIVES COMMANDS

Proverbs 10:8 says: *"The wise in heart will receive commandments: but a prating fool shall fall."*

LAYS UP KNOWLEDGE

Proverbs 10:14 says: *"Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction."*

CONTROLS LIPS

Proverbs 10:19 says: *"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise."*

HUMBLE

Proverbs 11:2 says: *"When pride cometh, then cometh shame but with the lowly is wisdom."*

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

Proverbs 11:29 says: *"He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: and the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart."*

WINS SOULS

Proverbs 11:30 says: *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."*

LISTENS TO COUNSEL

Proverbs 12:15 says: *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."*

CONTROLS THE TONGUE

Proverbs 12:18 says: *"There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health."*

LISTENS TO PARENTS

Proverbs 13:1 says: *"A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke."*

IS WELL INFORMED

Proverbs 13:10 says: *"Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well-advised is wisdom."*

IS CONSTRUCTIVE

Proverbs 14:1 says: *"Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands."*

HAS UNDERSTANDING

Proverbs 14:8 says: *"The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit."*

GIVES KNOWLEDGE

Proverbs 15:7 says: *"The lips of the wise disperse knowledge: but the heart of the foolish doeth not so."*

CAN TAKE A CHEWING OUT

Proverbs 17:10 says: *"A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool."*

WISE - Seeks to pinpoint and practice God's principles.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SIMPLE

Proverbs 14:15 says: *"The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going."*

Simple means **"unpleated"** or **"inexperienced"**. This is the young person who has not gotten acquainted with life's dangers. This also applies to the new Christian. A simple person's ears are open to the tempter's whispers. **The simple is easily swayed and is the target of schemes and cults.**

The wise man knows God's commands and the simple man does not. He needs teaching. The entire book of Proverbs was written to the simple so he could avoid all the unnecessary traps of life. Eve, in the Garden of Eden, was simple when she believed the serpent. Jacob's daughter, Dinah, was simple when she desired to meet the heathen girls around her.

Proverbs 7:7 says: *"And behold among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding."*

The youth in this story falls into immorality because he was not warned in advance against its dangers. Since the simple believe every word, it is easy for them to believe anything they read and hear. They are prime prospects to listen to gossip.

There is no sin in being a simple Christian - **but it is a sin to stay simple.** The only area a Christian is to be simple in is "simple concerning evil". The simple person needs to get into God's Word quickly.

Notice God's promise in Psalm 19:7, which says: *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."*

SIMPLE - Does not know God's principles

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOOL

The foolish is without aim. He is opposed to those who walk uprightly. He lacks character and feels he needs no counsel. He is easily offended, impulsive, and makes quick decisions.

ALL ARE BORN FOOLISH

Proverbs 22:15 says: *"Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."*

HAS NO CONTROL OVER MOUTH

Proverbs 9:13 says: *"A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing."*

Proverbs 12:23 says: *"A prudent man concealth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness."*

Proverbs 18:6-7 says: *"A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes. A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul."*

HAS A TEMPER AND ARGUES

Proverbs 12:16 says: *"A fool's wrath is presently known: but a prudent man covereth shame."*

Proverbs 14:16-17 says: *"A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident. He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated."*

HAS PRIDE

Proverbs 14:3 says: *"In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride: but the lips of the wise shall preserve them"*

IS DECEITFUL (Rationalizes)

Proverbs 14:8 says: *"The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way: but the folly of fools is deceit."*

SLANDERS AND LIES

Proverbs 10:18 says: *"He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool."*

SINS

Proverbs 10:23 says: *"It is as sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom."*

Proverbs 14:9 says: *"Fools make a mock at sin: but among the righteous there is favor."*

SEES NO NEED FOR COUNSEL (Feel he is always right)

Proverbs 12:15 says: *"The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise."*

NO DESIRE TO LEARN GOD'S WORD

Proverbs 23:9 says: *"Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words."*

BECOMES GRIEF TO PARENTS

Proverbs 17:25 says: *"A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him."*

DOES RIGHT WHEN FORCED

Proverbs 26:3 says: *"A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back."*

REPEATS SAME FOLLY

Proverbs 26:11 says: *"As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."*

HARD TO CHANGE

Proverbs 27:22 says: *"Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him."*

DOES NOT LIKE TO BE TOLD WHAT TO DO

Proverbs 15:5 says: *"A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent."*

UNDEPENDABLE

Proverbs 26:6 says: *"He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth of the feet, and drinketh damage."*

QUICK TO GIVE OPINION

Proverbs 29:11 says: *"A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise man keepeth it in till afterward."*

Proverbs 29:20 says: *"Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him."*

The Bible mentions many fools. The following characters showed some characteristics of foolishness in their lives: the prodigal son, Cain, Lot, Samson, and Absalom. You will not find anyone in the Bible who was a fool who ever changed.

A fool likes the limelight. He likes to have positions and titles. A fool does not like to work his way up the ladder of success so he tries to take shortcuts.

FOOL - Ignores and defies God's principles.

WARNING!!!

DO NOT ASSOCIATE WITH A FOOL

Proverbs 14:7 says: *"Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge."*

DO NOT AGREE WITH A FOOL

Proverbs 26:4 says: *"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him."*

DO NOT HONOR A FOOL

Proverbs 26:1 says: *"As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honor is not seemly for a fool."*

DO NOT SEEK A FOOL'S COUNSEL

Proverbs 24:7 says: *"Wisdom is too high for a fool: he openeth not his mouth in the gate."*

DO NOT TRUST A FOOL TO RELAY A MESSAGE

Proverbs 26:6 says: *"He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool cutteth off the feet, and drinketh damage."*

DO NOT ARGUE WITH A FOOL

Proverbs 29:9 says: *"If a wise man contendeth with a foolish man, whether he rage or laugh, there is no rest."*

REVIEW

WISE	SIMPLE	FOOL
Seeks to pin-point God's principles	Does not know God's principles	Ignores and defies God's principles
Knows where he is headed	Needs direction	Feels he has already arrived
Learns from his mistakes	Make many mistakes	Never learns from mistakes
Needs encouragement	Needs teaching	Needs repentance

HOW TO GET WISDOM

THERE ARE THREE SOURCES OF WISDOM:

WISE PEOPLE

Proverbs 13:20 says: *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”*

REPROOFS OF LIFE

Proverbs 15:31 says: *“The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise.”* (Difficulties which occur because you have violated one of God’s principles.)

WORD OF GOD

Proverbs 19:7 says: *“All the brethren of the poor do have him: how much more do his friends go far from him? he pursueth them with words, yet they are wanting to him.”*

GUIDELINES FOR SEEKING WISDOM

FEAR GOD

Proverbs 9:10 says: *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”*

Have a deep respect for God, His reputation, and His name. Meditate on His greatness and bigness.

LISTEN

Proverbs 2:2 says: *“So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding;”*

Proverbs 8:6 says: *“Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things.”*

Proverbs 9:9 says: *“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.”*

God has given us two ears and only one mouth. Maybe He wanted us to listen twice as much as we talk.

ASK QUESTIONS

Proverbs 2:3 says: *“Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding;”*

Luke 2:46 says: *“And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.”*

As a youth, Jesus asked questions and listened to the wise men of his day. When Abraham Lincoln was around someone who knew a subject he did not, he would ask them so many questions that they felt drained afterwards.

READ

Proverbs 2:4 says: *"If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures;"*

We ought to read the Bible daily. Bathe especially in Proverbs. Do not read the Bible just for information, but pinpoint exact commands, promises, and principles for your life. Also, you need to schedule times of reading great Christian literature. The Christian classics as *In His Steps* and *Pilgrim's Progress* are so helpful. Read biographies of great Christians. Abe Lincoln once said, "My best friend is a man who gives me a book I ain't read!" Leaders are readers!

WATCH DAILY

Proverbs 8:17 says: *"I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me."*

Proverbs 8:34 says: *"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors."*

Be observant. You can learn much about life by simply watching people.

WALK WITH WISE MEN

Proverbs 13:20 says: *"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."*

Birds of a feather flock together. Wisdom rubs off! Schedule yourself around the wise by your presence, reading their books, hearing them speak in person or by tape. Someone said, "A year from now you will be the same as you are today except for the books you read and the people you meet."

PRAY FOR IT

James 1:5 says: *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."*

Make asking for wisdom your constant prayer.

PROPER DISCIPLINE OF CHILDREN

Proverbs 29:15 says: *"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."*

Consistent correction drives foolishness from a child. A parent can help his child become wise if he is consistent.

OUR EXAMPLE

Who never sinned? Who never fell into the devil's traps? Who knew how to handle every situation? Who did all things well? Jesus. He was full of wisdom. Read His life in the gospels. Let us hunger and thirst to be like Him and have the mind of Christ and the wisdom He has!

NAME: _____

REVIEW WISDOM - FOOLS - STEP 11

1. What is the main objective in the Christian life? _____
 2. Give one definition of wisdom: _____
 3. Name the three basic kinds of people: _____
 4. Who asked for wisdom in a dream? _____
 5. Name two results of having wisdom: _____
 6. Give three characteristics of a wise person:

 7. Simple means _____
 8. Who was the book of Proverbs written to? _____
 9. The simple need to get into _____
 10. Describe the fool in your own words: _____

 11. List five characteristics of a fool:

 12. Give two warnings concerning fools:

 13. The wise seeks to pinpoint and _____
 14. The simple needs _____
 15. Name the three sources of wisdom:

 16. List three ways to obtain wisdom:

 17. Who is our example in being wise? _____
 18. Have you determined which of the three characters you are? _____
 19. Have you begun praying daily for wisdom? _____
- Have you begun noticing wise people you need to be getting around? _____
- Do you have any associates who are fools? _____