Fools and Simpletons
What's In a Name?
JP Hanna

Key Scripture:
Proverbs 14:16 (NLT):
16 The wise are cautious and avoid danger;
fools plunge ahead with reckless confidence.

1 Samuel 25:14-17 (NLT)
14 Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants went to Abigail and told her, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed insults at them. 15 These men have been very good to us, and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us. 16 In fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep. 17 You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!"

1 Samuel 25:23-25 (NLT)
23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him. 24 She fell at his feet and said, "I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say. 25 I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests. But I never even saw the young men you sent.

1 Samuel 25:12–13 (NLT)
12 So David's young men returned and told him what Nabal had said. 13 "Get your swords!" was David's reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment.

Proverbs 13:20 (NLT)
20 Walk with the wise and become wise;
associate with fools and get in trouble.

Matthew 5:39

1 Corinthians 6:7-8

James 1:5

TALK IT OVER

Start talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you ever had a moment of acting rashly when you spoke too soon or made a decision without thinking? What happened, and what did you learn from it?

Start sharing. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- **Read Proverbs 14:16** – How does Nabal embody this verse? Why do some people struggle to recognize their own foolishness, even when others can clearly see it?
- **Read 1 Samuel 25:14-17**. What are some signs that someone is beyond reason, and why is it dangerous to be a person who refuses to listen? How do we see humility and wisdom (or lack thereof) play out in this passage?
- How did David react in **1 Samuel 25:12–13**? What caused him to react this way, and how can we train ourselves to pause and seek wisdom before reacting?
- **Read 1 Samuel 25:23-25**. How did Abigail's posture, words, and actions help de-escalate the situation? What principles from her approach can we apply when facing conflict in our own lives?
- What does Abigail's story teach us about the importance of discernment and quick, wise decision-making? What situations in life require us to act fast in wisdom rather than wait too long and let problems escalate?
- **Read Proverbs 13:20** – How have you seen the influence of foolishness or wisdom in the people you surround yourself with? What are ways to intentionally seek out godly counsel?

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- This week, reflect on an area of life where you tend to react emotionally or impulsively. Pray for discernment, seek wise counsel, and make a conscious effort to respond with wisdom.

Start praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- Father, we recognize that wisdom is a gift from You, and we ask for it in every area of our lives. Help us to reject the reckless confidence of foolishness and instead walk in humility, discernment, and self-control. Give us hearts that listen to wise counsel, and help us to be people who encourage wisdom in others. Thank You for Your grace and patience with us. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Question: "How can I get wisdom from God?"

Answer: “Wisdom is supreme—so get wisdom. And whatever else you get, get understanding,” says Proverbs 4:7. The Bible talks a lot about gaining wisdom and defines it by giving examples and then showcasing what happens when we don’t act wisely. The book of Proverbs contrasts the wise and the foolish and tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10). So we get wisdom when we learn to live in the fear of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord is a reverence for Him that has a great impact on the way we live. The fear of God is respecting Him, obeying Him, submitting to His discipline, and worshiping Him in awe. Those who fear the Lord have a conscious awareness that their loving heavenly Father is watching and evaluating everything they think, say, or do. When we live with the sense of God’s nearness, we make wiser decisions. An ornery child will be motivated to behave better with the oversight of a parent. Likewise, we may know what God’s Word says about a situation, but the knowledge that He is actively observing us motivates us to obey.

We find the wisdom of God in His written Word. Following God’s testimonies has a way of “making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7). We become wise when we study the Word and apply it to our lives: “Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts” (Psalm 119:98–100). We grow in wisdom and can safely navigate the pitfalls of this world when we have the Bible as our guide.

We also develop wisdom when we learn from our mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes, but the difference between the wise and the foolish is that wise people learn their lessons and don’t repeat the sin. Fools rush back in over and over, puzzled as to why they keep getting the same results. Proverbs 26:11 says that as a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool returns to his folly. However, to get wisdom, we evaluate our folly from God’s perspective and set personal boundaries so that we don’t repeat it.

Wisdom involves seeing life from God’s perspective and acting accordingly. We must remove the shackles of earth-bound thinking and purpose to see life through a bigger lens. Life is not about us. It is about God. We are only tiny pieces of God’s big plan, and a person seeking wisdom will acknowledge that. A wise prayer is, “Lord, help me see this situation from Your perspective and make choices that please You.” When our goal is the glory for the Lord, our decisions will have a better chance of being wise (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Those wanting to get wisdom from God are going to have to reject so-called wisdom from other sources. Those with worldly thinking will always advise against true, godly wisdom. Saving sex for marriage, avoiding drunkenness, and giving sacrificially to God’s work all appear as foolishness to the worldly-wise. Those who wish to get wisdom from God must be prepared to be misunderstood by the rest of the world (John 15:18).

James 1:5 promises that, when we need wisdom, we need only ask of God, and He will give it to us. But we must ask in faith with plans to obey (verse 6). Many people want God’s wisdom, but then they want to weigh it against their own understanding and decide for themselves whether or not they will follow it. But Proverbs 3:5–6 warns us not to lean on our own understanding. Rather, we are to trust in the One who knows all things, including the end from the beginning. He is the One who has our best interests at heart.

© Copyright 2002-2025 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved.
www.GotQuestions.org