

Are You A fool?

Have you ever encountered the fool that is talked about in the book of Proverbs? Sometimes we think of “the fool” as describing one of those awful heathen-pagan-wicked-responsible-for-the-decay-of-America people and forget that the fool might be someone closer to home. We might even encounter them in homeschooling circles! In fact, on occasion...the fool might even be *us!* (Gasp!)

Let’s look at how Proverbs describes the fool and see how his or her foolish actions can manifest themselves in homeschooling.

Proverbs 12:15: *The way of a fool seems right to him, but a wise man listens to advice.*

Maybe you’ve met the cocky homeschooler who, having read *several* blogs—or maybe even a book!—about homeschooling now thinks she knows *everything* and brushes off the wisdom offered by more experienced people. She knows the “one best way” to homeschool and doggedly plows along with her particular method or curriculum, regardless of how well it actually works for her family. No amount of suggestions or advice offered by seasoned veterans can convince this homeschooler to alter her approach one iota.

Obviously, it behooves all of us to watch out for this insidious attitude and not be convinced that our methods are the *only* ideal way and cannot *possibly* be improved on by anyone else’s wisdom.

Proverbs 12:16: *A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.* Who does this verse describe? Maybe it’s the lady who got upset when her kids were accidentally overlooked during a co-op activity. She begins spreading catty gossip about how “rude” and “snobbish” all those rat-finks are over at the such-and-such group! Maybe it’s the man who decides he’s fed up with the skeptical relatives who are always making little jibes about homeschooling. So he sends a caustic e-mail to those people, detailing all of their sins, faults, failures, quirks, and physical shortcomings. Or maybe it’s the person that wants to “be in charge”—be it of the co-op, the field trip, or the activity—and becomes petulant if someone insinuates that they could improve the way they manage things. Of course, it could also simply be a husband or wife who prickles at the least little annoying thing their spouse says, bringing discord and disunity into the homeschool.

Love and harmony are treasures. Showing annoyance at every offense is a terrific way to cause division, strife and hurt feelings. We should all guard ourselves, lest this verse be describing us!

Proverbs 14:9: *Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.* Okay, we admit it—everyone makes mistakes and everyone sins. However, our response to our sinful actions often says more about us than the actual sin itself. Perhaps you’ve met someone who will not admit they are wrong and will not try to make restoration. Maybe it’s the family whose uncontrolled, hyper children spilled pop all over your display at a used curriculum sale, ruining some of your items. Afterward the parents simply shrugged it off by saying, “Sorry, my kids are really sensitive to sugar,” and made no attempt at restitution. Maybe it’s the person who decided at the last minute that they were “too busy” to teach the co-op class they committed to

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Each and every, attempt to give 2018 prior warning or suggest a substitute. Maybe it's the family who let their teenage daughters wear something far too revealing at the homeschool picnic and then snipped, "That's your problem!" when you told them it was causing your young son to stumble.
By Raquelle Sheen
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All of us instead need to have the "goodwill" that this verse mentions and be willing to admit our shortcomings and make amends when we have given offense or caused our neighbor damage or serious inconvenience.

Proverbs 17:24: A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth. We all know this person. It is often the family who pridefully determines that their children will have the very, very best education—definitely better than the kids in all the *other* homeschooling families they know. If some is good, then more is better! Envisioning all manner of worldly success for their children, they enroll them in *absolutely everything*—soccer, baseball, volleyball, ballet, piano lessons, violin lessons, tap dancing, horseback riding, gymnastics, poetry classes, art lessons, 4-H, and drama. The children dizzily whiz from one activity to the next, absorbing far less than their parents imagine simply because it is too much for them to process.

This family has failed to keep wisdom in view. There is much more to life than having a lot of skills and attaining worldly success, though these things are not wrong in themselves. Nurturing a child in the love of the Lord and training him to attain *heavenly* success is a prize of far greater value. Quality discipleship time is extremely difficult to have while dashing in from one activity to the next in a continuous whirlwind. Wisdom—and yes, real and focused learning—are better learned during quiet, relationship-building days than on the run in the car.

It is good for us to examine our lives periodically and make sure that our efforts are geared towards eternally valuable objects. It easy to let our eyes wander here and there and not remember where our primary focus should be.

Proverbs 18:2: A fool finds no pleasure in understanding, but delights in airing his own opinions. Maybe some of you are picturing a certain person right now! Who can forget the person who loves to hear the sound of their own voice? I'm sure you have all attended a homeschool meeting where one or two people *always* had something to offer on *every* topic—usually a 5-minute monologue each time. It is often entertaining to notice that this person will ask, "What should I do about...?" as often as everyone else, but then will proceed to answer their own question and advise everyone of every little barely-related nugget of information they have. There may be someone at the meeting who could genuinely answer the question and offer some sound wisdom, but their voice goes unheeded—if they ever get a chance to open their mouth in the first place.

It is extremely easy for us to fall into the habit of constantly airing our own opinions—after all, haven't we spent some time thinking them out and perfecting them? Don't we want to enlighten the poor, unenlightened masses and share with them the brilliant conclusions we've reached

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Are you a fool? Am I a fool? Let's guard our steps lest we fall, all too easily, into the fool's ways.