

## Connection to Proverbs 1:7-19

Solomon shows his readers where wisdom begins, where it comes from, what it looks like lived out, and the results of it not being pursued. The pursuit of wisdom, or the lack thereof, is not unique to Solomon. We can turn to the beginnings of God's Word for this same pattern and results.

## Introduction/Opening

Solomon tells us in Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and discipline." No matter what our ages might be, we desire to be wise and not foolish. No one wants to be labeled a fool.

If this is true, then pursuing and following wisdom becomes part of one's journey. In this pursuit, it becomes vital to know the difference between wise words and words of a fool. It is also good to know what happens when we act unwisely. We find answers to this second question from the life of Adam and Eve.

## Outline

1. Listen to Wisdom.
  - a) Adam and Eve heard God speak to them, but did they listen? God told Adam in Gen. 2:17 that he should not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and if he did, he would die. Eve told the serpent that she could not eat or touch it (Gen. 3:3). While this is only a subtle change, the result is significant. If one truly desires wisdom, it is important to know and understand God's Word without adding to or taking away from it.
  - b) Wisdom is more than knowledge. James told the scattered church that the demons have a working knowledge of God (Jas. 2:19). Wisdom takes place when this knowledge is applied. Once again, Adam and Eve had knowledge of what not to do. They were unwise, however, in that they didn't accurately apply the knowledge.
2. Avoid Foolishness.
  - a) If some words are wise, then this means that some words are foolish. If God speaks words of wisdom, then someone else is speaking words of foolishness. We find the serpent to be the one who speaks foolishness. One mode of operation that he employs is to question the words of wisdom. His first words were, "Did God really say....?" He is still using this same method today.
  - b) Another characteristic of the one who speaks foolishness is that he is cunning. This word in the Hebrew means to be crafty or sly. He is not going to walk in the back door of the church in a red suit with a pitchfork. We would all recognize him and run.

Instead, he will present himself in a crafty manner. We need to be aware of this fool so that he doesn't lead us into foolishness.

3. Understand Consequences.

- a) As much as we may not like it, we will all act like fools from time-to-time. It might help if we were to stop and consider the negative consequence for our foolishness. After Adam and Eve realized their foolishness, they hid themselves (3:8). They were ashamed of what they had done and didn't want to be in God's presence.
- b) Consequences are not always negative. A positive consequence is found in God's behavior toward Adam and Eve. God was aware of their sin and yet He still called out to them in their shame (3:9). God need not be viewed as being angry at those who are foolish. Yes, He is both loving and just. Even in His justice though, we see Him calling out to those who are engaged in foolish behavior. This reality should give us hope.

## Conclusion

Like Adam and Eve, we all have engaged in foolish behavior. This behavior is ultimately known as sin. When we sin, we too feel shame and want to hide. But just like God pursued Adam and Eve, He pursues us through the offering of Jesus for our sins. Wisdom would say that we should not run from Him but rather toward Him and receive His love in spite of our sinful foolishness.

---

*Tod Tanner is a graduate of Texas A&M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Texas and Tennessee. He and his wife Deborah, along with their daughter Danielle, live in Wartrace, Tennessee.*

*All Scripture quotations are taken from the Christian Standard Bible<sup>®</sup>, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers.*