



ST. PAUL'S BIBLE STUDY

Ecclesiastes
10:1-7

Pastor's Notes

V. 1a One bad apple spoils the bunch; small dead flies make perfume stinky. Essentially everything we do in this life that is honorable will be spoiled by at least one foolish sinner. Silly foolish sinners can be like a tiny squeaky wheel and ruin the best intentions of a whole.

V. 1b Keep in mind, Solomon is not describing what life is supposed to be like but the way that it is. And how does life go? Well, fools go after foolish things even when there are large amounts of wisdom that says otherwise. Ever talk to a foolish person where the right decision is obvious? And yet no matter how much good advice they get, they do the foolish thing?

V. 2 This verse is simple enough. Simply stated, the wise man and the fool will never agree on the right course in life. A wise man should never listen to a fool, and a fool is incapable of listening to a wise man. This is why you should not waste time arguing on social media with fools. It is a waste of time. A fool is incapable of understanding wisdom. But should the wise not help the fool? If the fool is not willing to listen and is not open to wisdom, it is wasted energy. This is a tragic reality of life under the sun.

V. 3a To walk on a road is relatively easy. It does not take much wisdom or strenuous contemplation. You simply walk on the road and follow its direction to be safely brought to a destination. However, a fool is easily spotted for he will make such an easy task difficult. Indeed, a fool will make walking on the road difficult because he will not recognize the road for what it is. He will either overthink the simplicity of the road or under think the simplicity of the road, and by his actions not arrive safely to the destination but end up in the ditch.

V. 3b A fool also tends to wear their heart on their sleeve. They often speak about their thoughts and emotions without fully forming these thoughts and emotions. While this is healthy to do with a spouse, family members, counselors, and pastors, it can be dangerous in this life under the sun. Broadcasting one's words, feelings, and undeveloped thoughts to a sinful world, unfortunately, allows predators ways in

which to manipulate and hurt a fool. In this life, under the sun a person has to keep their cards close to their chest, as they say. While authenticity is noble, making oneself an open book is opening oneself to those who might manipulate. To the point; do not broadcast to a sinful world undeveloped thoughts and insecure emotions for the world will not show mercy to the weak and especially the fool.

V. 4 The point of verse four is quite clear. In the presence of people who are angry with you, especially those who are above you, do not leave their presence. When you fail at a job, upset a superior, or offended an authority figure, do not tuck tail and run. It not only makes you look guilty but you then remove the opportunity to apologize if need be. Furthermore, once the person in authority calms down, they may desire to give an apology and you can give a reasonable explanation for your actions (not to justify, but to clarify). However, if you run at signs of conflict or trouble, you eliminate any possibility of resolution or the need to stand up for yourself—if need be.

V. 5-7 According to Bollhagen, "sin in the world establishes a corrupt system whereby fools can take control. A sinful world naturally lends itself to the "Peter principle," that people rise to the level of their incompetence – then a promoter the higher still. Truly wise people, who realize their limitations and who can anticipate the weight of responsibility involved in the fair administration of important affairs, tend to shy away from positions of authority. Only fools heedless of the gravity of the responsibilities are left to assume those positions. The sad result is that those who covet positions of power the most are usually the least qualified for the jobs."

There is another aspect of leadership. Since the world is corrupted by sin, advancement often has little to do with competence and integrity for corrupt systems of power often award evil rather than justice. Bribes, favors, manipulation, and blackmail, are the tactics of evil systems that operate by power and not servanthood.

All of what we have been learning is showing us how life under the sun works. Solomon does not always talk about the way things should be, but how they are. Wisdom is twofold: it understands the way things should be and at the same time understands how things are in this life under the sun.