

Contrast between the Wise and the Foolish

The wise person:

understands what is right, just, and fair (2:9; 8:15-16),
is protected from harm (2:8, 11-12, 16; 4:6; 6:24; 7:5; 14:3),
and has prosperity and wealth (3:2, 16; 8:18, 21; 9:12; 14:24; 16:20; 21:20-21; 22:4),
health and nourishment (3:8; 4:22),
favor and good reputation (3:4; 8:34-35; 13:15),
honor (3:16, 35; 4:8-9; 8:18; 21:21),
security and safety (1:33; 3:22-23; 4:12; 12:21; 22:3; 28:26),
peace (1:33; 3:17-24),
confidence (3:25-26),
guidance (6:22),
life (3:2, 16, 18, 22; 4:10, 22; 6:23; 8:35; 9:11; 10:16-17, 27; 11:19; 16:22; 19:23; 22:4),
health (4:22),
and hope (23:18; 24:14).

Others also benefit from an individual's wisdom. For example, the wise person brings joy to his parents (10:1; 15:20; 23:15-16, 24-25; 27:11; 29:3).

Righteous/wise living results in a tree of life (11:30; 13:12; 15:4; cf. 3:18), that is, like a tree it is a source of benefit to others.

And wisdom is also a fountain of life (10:11; 13:14; 15:27; 16:22) bringing rejuvenation to others.

No wonder wisdom is to be...

sought after (2:3-4)

attained (4:5, 7)

loved (v. 6)

chosen (v. 8)

grasped and guarded (v. 13)

heard (vv. 32-34)

and found (v. 35)

Wisdom is to be valued like a necklace (1:9; 3:3, 22; cf. 6:21)

and a garland or crown on one's head (1:9; 4:9)

Source: Roy B. Zuck, "A Theology of the Wisdom Books and the Song of Songs," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, Roy B. Zuck, ed. p. 233

In contrast, the fool is:

1. Unrighteous: The fool hates what is holy, righteous, and good, and he loves evil. (vv. 13:19; 10:23; 14:9)
2. Unwise: Throughout Proverbs the fool is the counterpart of the wise. Wisdom is contrasted with folly. The fool does not possess wisdom, cannot obtain wisdom, and would not obtain it if he could.
 - Does not possess wisdom (10:21; cf. 1:20-33)
 - Is not capable of obtaining wisdom (17:16; 14:6; 24:7)
 - Has no desire for wisdom, would reject it even if he could acquire it because he hates it (1:7; cf. 1:22; 15:14; 18:2; 23:9)
3. Unrealistic: The fool fails to see things as they are. Reality is distorted by the fool's distorted outlook on life.
 - About himself – he overestimates his knowledge and abilities (21:24)
 - About life – he thinks wisdom can be obtained easily, like purchasing a candy bar at a corner drug store (17:16)
 - Unconcerned with present realities – a wishful thinker. His "ship" is always about to come in (17:24)
4. Undisciplined: The fool looks upon self-control as a needless and useless denial of present pleasure. Because of this, every area of his life lacks discipline.
 - With money and material resources (21:30)
 - With his temper (12:16; 29:11)
 - With his mouth (12:23, cf. 10:14; 15:2; cf. 18:2, 7; 10:8, 10).
5. Unreliable:

- In his work: The fool is dishonest and evil and cannot be trusted in any area (26:6; 26:10)
 - In his words: The words of the fool are always to be questioned. He is a liar, a deceiver, and a slanderer (10:18; 14:8; 19:1; 15:2; 15:7, cf. v. 14)
6. Unteachable: Try as you like, attempting to teach a fool is frustrating at best, and often painful. Whenever a fool is faced with wisdom and instruction, he will reject it (1:7; 1:29-32; 15:5; 9:7-8; 15:12; 17:10; 27:22)
- The fool cannot even learn from his own mistakes. Given the opportunity, he will repeat his folly: (26:11)
 - It is ironic, but true, that while the fool refuses to be taught, he is eager to teach others from his abundance of “wisdom”: (12:23; 18:2)
7. Unpleasant, Unliked and Undesirable: The fool is a menace, a detriment to society.
- He is a pain to his parents, for he hates them (15:20) and causes them grief (10:1; 17:21, 25; 19:23)
 - He is a disaster wherever he goes (10:14; 17:12)
 - He hinders the understanding of others (14:7)
 - His speech is slanderous (10:18)
 - He is quarrelsome (20:3), and stirs up dissension and anger (18:6; 22:10; 29:8)
 - So far as society is concerned, the fool is an abomination (24:9)

Source: *The Fool*, a message by Bob Deffinbaugh from the series, *The Way of the Wise: Studies in the Book of Proverbs* <http://bible.org/series/way-wise-studies-book-proverbs>