

Sample Study

Proverbs 10-31

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Read – Scripture references as given.

No one needs to be a fool—especially you. No one needs to blunder through life reaping the devastating consequences of one bad decision after another. God has promised you a better life; ... **His (God's) divine power has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness** (2 Pe. 1:3). God has promised to provide everything you need to live a God-honoring life.

This Proverbs 10-31 Bible Study will help you understand how to live wisely in a world filled with lies and inhabited by fools. *“But don’t be fearful,”* says Lady Wisdom, *“just follow the clearly-marked road signs (i.e., the proverbs) and you will reach your destination safely.”*

The main body of proverbs begins in chapter ten as the content of the Book moves abruptly from concept (i.e., the definition of wisdom, etc.) to concrete (i.e., the disciplines of wisdom in the various situations of life). Now, before you begin, please ask God to reveal Himself through His Word and to transform you into the image of His Son. May God bless your diligent study of God’s Word.

1. The first nine chapters of Proverbs introduced you to two sets of contrasting characters—Lady Wisdom/the immoral woman and the wise son/a group of fools. When the word “fool” is used in Proverbs in a general sense, it identifies the general character weaknesses or deficiencies that are common to all fools. Why are all fools unable to gain the wisdom they need to be successful in daily living (Pro. 12:15, 15:5, 17:24, 18:2)?

2. In the book of Proverbs fools are described as individuals who reject the wisdom and authority of God. They place unwarranted confidence in their own reasoning ability and fail to accurately assess their failures. Blinded by pride, they blunder through life offering unsolicited advice to others. Why are some people so willing to offer unwise counsel to others when their personal lives are strewn with countless examples of moral and ethical failure (Pro. 14:16)?

3. It has been said that man only has two problems in life; he doesn’t know who God is and he doesn’t know who he is in relationship to God. Only God’s Word answers these two questions satisfactorily. There is an old statement that reads, “The world is filled with foolish people, but God loves us all.” Give at least three additional reasons why fools experience continual problems in their lives (Pro. 13:19, 20:3, 28:25, 29:11)?

4. Pro. 26:11 says, **As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.** Fools are fools because they repeat the same mistakes that have caused them problems in the past.
 - a. Many believers forfeit the blessings of God because they also repeat the mistakes of the past. In which of the following area(s) of your life do you continue to err because you refuse to submit yourself to God? Circle the one(s) that continue to be a problem in your life.

personal relations	work/employment	finances	moral behavior/lust
honesty/integrity	unforgiveness/anger	pride	speech - gossip/slander
 - b. What specific change(s) do you need to make to avoid repeating the error(s) you identified in the previous question? (Note: This is an important question that may require additional thought and application. Perhaps you should set aside a few hours to ask God to help you develop a plan to overcome your problem areas.)

5. Many Christians struggle in life because they make some decisions according to God's Word and others according to their own human reason or feelings. When an individual vacillates between these two methods of decision-making (i.e., God's truth vs. human reason), the Bible says he is double-minded (cf. Ja. 1:7, 8; Gr. *dipsuchos* – double-souled or double-minded; i.e., one who is divided between living by faith and living according to the world's system). His unwillingness to consistently follow God's ways makes him unstable in his thinking, inconsistent in his actions, and a poor reflection on Christ.
- How does God describe those who make decisions based upon their own intellect and emotions rather than on God's Word (Pro. 28:26)?
 - In what area(s) of your life do you find it difficult to fully trust and obey God? (Note: This is not the same question as #4b. This question is asking you in what area(s) of your life do you find it difficult to trust God. Even though it is difficult for you, you may still be victorious with God's help.)
6. Many ancient cities were enclosed by a wall that protected the residents from intruders during a time of war. The main city gate was also a place where people met to conduct personal business and the men of the city met there to oversee the affairs of the city (cf. Ru. 4:1-9). Because the fool does not avail himself to the wisdom of God he is not able to **open his mouth in the gate** (Pro. 24:7). *What do you think* this means and what would be a modern example of this?
7. Our English words "fool" and "folly" come from the Latin word "follies," meaning bellows. Fools are windbags who routinely spout off about things they know very little about. They place value on things that are worthless and think lightly about things that God deems valuable. For example, sin is an enemy of every dedicated believer of God – something to be resisted and avoided.
- How do fools regard sin (Pro. 10:23, 14:9, 15:21)?
 - How do you think a Christian can determine if he has a proper Biblical view of sin?
8. a. Another characteristic of fools is their unholy alliance with anger. Most angry people don't realize the extent of their problem or the number of casualties that lay in their path of destruction. In fact, they often justify their sin by saying they are just frustrated, annoyed, or irritated – all feeble attempts to redefine their sin. What does the book of Proverbs teach us about those who allow their anger to control their lives and hurt others (Pro. 14:29, 15:18, 19:19, 20:3)?
- The New Testament writer James says Christians are to be **slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God** (Ja. 1:19, 20). How many times have you become angry in the last month? (Note: Include the times when you were frustrated, annoyed, and irritated.)
9. Fools are proud people and proud people are fools. Pride, at its core, is a failure to recognize that everything we are and have is a gift from God. It robs God of His glory and perverts the ultimate purpose of man's existence, which is to glorify God.
- What does the book of Proverbs teach about pride and its consequences (Pro. 14:3, 16:18, 27:1)?
 - The Bible paints a very bleak picture of the fool. However, there is more hope for him than someone else mentioned in Scripture. Who is this unfortunate individual (Pro. 26:12)?

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1.
 1. Fools are so prideful that they believe everything they do is right (Pro. 12:15).
 2. Fools despise their father's instruction so they never learned what they should have when they were growing up (Pro. 15:5). They have incorporated a lot of bad habits into their lives.
 3. Fools are often wide-eyed dreamers (**eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth**) who have never learned to apply themselves to the tasks of hand. Their fanciful dreams lead them away from assuming the responsibility of mental discipline and gaining the kind of education they need to be productive in life.
 4. Fools have no delight in understanding. All they want to do is express their own ill-fated plans and ideas.

2. Fools are often hotheaded and self-confident. They are also not careful about their actions and speech. Since fools find trouble easily, they always seem to want to be angry at someone or about something.

3.
 1. Fools are prideful, so they have a hard time admitting when they have been wrong. They would rather stick with their opinion or perspective even though it is wrong than humble themselves, admit their error, and move on (Pro. 13:19).
 2. Fools are quick to quarrel (Pro. 20:3).
 3. Fools are proud (Pro. 28:25). All people, even the unsaved, find pride detestable in other people.
 4. Fools are often uncontrolled in expressing their speech (Pro. 29:11). They often express their feelings (i.e., pride, anger, etc.) to others who don't appreciate their empty-headed, self-centered perspective.

4.
 - a. Answers will vary.
 - b. Answers will vary.

5.
 - a. A fool.
 - b. Answers will vary.

6. The fool does not have anything significant to say about matters of importance. Examples: 1. Social gatherings where meaningful conversation is taking place. 2. Business meetings at places of employment within a community. 3. Meetings within social, political and religious groups where important issues are discussed and decisions are made. 4. Other answers could apply.

7.
 - a.
 1. Sport (Pro. 10:23). 2. Mochery (Pro. 14:9). 3. Joy (Pro. 15:21).
 - b.
 1. A Christian can evaluate his emotional response to the Lord's judgment of man's sin. If the believer feels that God is too harsh with His judgment, it likely indicates that he is looking at sin too lightly.
 2. A Christian can determine if he has a proper view of sin by evaluating what makes him laugh. Is he entertained by good clean fun or does he laugh at the things that grieve God's heart and for which Christ died to set men free?
 3. Other answers could apply.

8.
 - a.
 1. Hot-headed or angry people are impulsive and display their foolish ways to others (Pro. 14:29).
 2. Quick-tempered people cause dissension and strife (Pro. 15:18).
 3. Angry people will suffer punishment (Pro. 19:19).
 4. Any fool can be angry and start a fight (Pro. 20:3).
 - b. Christians should be slow to become angry (Ja. 1:19) because man's anger does not produce the righteous behavior that God wants from His people.

9.
 - a.
 1. A man's pride will lead him to destruction (Pro. 16:18). Pride blinds men to the wise counsel that could keep them from problems. Pride also blinds men to their own shortcomings that can cause a man's downfall. Pride also causes other people to not want to reach out to others on need.
 2. No man should be boastful about what he is going to do or accomplish because no one knows the future (Pro. 27:1).
 - b. A proud person.

