



# Proverbs 10-31

Wise Up and Live

Sample Lesson #1  
and  
Leader's Guide Answers

## ONE

# DON'T PLAY THE FOOL

Read Proverbs 10;  
other 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. The Bible says **His [God's] divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness** (2 Peter 1:3). God has promised to provide everything you need to live a God-honoring life.

In this Proverbs 10–31 Bible study, the main body of Proverbs begins as the content of the book moves abruptly from *conceptual* (the definition and value of wisdom, Proverbs 1–9) to *concrete* (the disciplines of wisdom in the various situations of life). The lessons in this Bible study are presented topically (fools, finances, speech, worldview, etc.) to help you gain a fuller understanding of the recurring themes in this portion of the book.

Before you begin each lesson in this study, 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 two sets of contrasting characters—lady wisdom and the immoral woman, and the wise son and two of the three fools (naïve, stubborn, scornful) in the book. When the word *fool* is used in Proverbs in a general sense, it identifies the character weaknesses or deficiencies common to all fools. Why are



Lombardi Time  
Rule:

If the leader  
arrives early, he  
or she has time to  
pray, prepare the  
room, and greet  
others personally.

ADD GROUP  
INSIGHTS BELOW

fools unable to gain the wisdom they need to be successful in daily living?

Proverbs 12:15: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 15:5: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 17:24: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Proverbs 18:2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. The book of Proverbs describes fools as individuals who willfully reject the wisdom and authority of God. They place unwarranted confidence in their own reasoning and fail to accurately assess their failures, which prevents them from learning from their mistakes. Blinded by pride, they blunder through life, rejecting truth and offering unsolicited and unwise counsel to others. Why are some people so willing to offer unwise counsel to others when their personal lives are strewn with multiple examples of moral and ethical failure (Proverbs 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. Someone said "The world is filled with foolish people, but God loves us all." Give at least three additional reasons why fools experience continual problems in life (Proverbs 13:19; 20:3; 28:25-26; 29:11).

## Don't Play the Fool

---

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)

4. Proverbs 26:11 says, **As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.** Fools are fools because they don't learn from their mistakes.

a. Many believers forfeit the blessings of God because they repeat their errors. In which of the following areas of your life do you see a pattern of repeating your mistakes and failing to submit to God? Circle the ones that continue to be a problem in your life.

personal relations	work/employment
financial stewardship	moral behavior/lust
honesty/integrity	unforgiveness/anger
pride	speech: gossip/slander

b. What *specific* changes do you need to make to avoid repeating past mistakes?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Some Christians make some of their decisions according to God's Word, but others according to their own reasoning.



### Zip-It Rule:

Group members should agree to disagree, but should never be disagreeable.

ADDITIONAL  
INSIGHTS

When an individual vacillates between these two methods of decision making (truth versus faulty human reasoning), the Bible says the man is double-minded (James 1:7–8). The Greek word translated as “double-minded” (*dipsuchos*) means “double-souled” or “double-minded.” It refers to someone who is divided in his thinking between living by faith and living according to human reason. When a believer is unwilling to consistently trust and obey God, he is naturally inconsistent in his thoughts and actions, and he is a poor reflection of Christ.

- a. How does God describe the person who makes decisions based on his own intellect and emotions rather than on God’s Word (Proverbs 28:26)?

---

---

---

- b. The psalmist asked God to **Unite my heart to fear Your name** (Psalm 86:11). What do you think he was asking God to do for him?

---

---

---

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 the place where people entered the city and met to conduct business, and the elders met there to oversee the affairs of the city (Ruth 4:1–9). Because a fool does not avail himself of the wisdom of God, he is not able to **open his mouth in the gate** (Proverbs 24:7). What *do you think* this means, and what are some modern examples of this?

---

## Don't Play the Fool

---

---

---

7. Our English words *fool* and *folly* come from the Latin word *follis*, meaning bellows. Fools are “windbags” who often speak confidently about things they don’t know much about. They place value on things that God deems of little value, and they lightly esteem the things God values.

- a. How do fools regard sin (Proverbs 10:23; 14:9; 15:21)?

---

---

- b. 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. Ill-tempered people often don’t realize the extent of their problem or the pain they inflict on others because of their anger. They routinely justify their sin by saying they are only frustrated, annoyed, or irritated—all feeble attempts to redefine their sin. What does Proverbs say about those who allow anger to control their lives (Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 19:19; 20:3)?

---

---

---

---

- b. The New Testament writer James says Christians are to be **slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not**



### Online Training:

Do you want to learn how to disciple another person, become a more effective Bible study leader, or start a new study??  
Go to [www.LamplightersUSA.org/training](http://www.LamplightersUSA.org/training) to learn how.

ADDITIONAL  
INSIGHTS

**produce the righteousness of God** (James 1:19–20). How many times do you think you have been angry, frustrated, annoyed, or irritated in the last month?

---

9. a. 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 (Proverbs 16:18; 27:1)?

- b. 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 (Proverbs 26:12)?
- 
- 
- 

- c. In what ways *do you think* your life will change as a result of having learned what the Bible teaches about double-mindedness, pride and arrogance, and the destructive effects of anger?
- 
- 
- 
- 
-

---

# LEADERS' GUIDE

## Lesson 1: Don't Play the Fool

1. 1. Fools are prideful and think everything they do is right (Proverbs 12:15).
  2. Fools despise instruction so they never learn from others who may want to help them learn (Proverbs 15:5).
  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 or disciplined themselves to do the things necessary to be successful in any venture. Their fanciful dreams occupy their minds to the point that they never apply the mental discipline needed to be truly productive in life (Proverbs 17:24).
  4. Fools have no delight or pleasure in understanding. All they want to do is express their own ill-fated plans and ideas (Proverbs 18:2).
- 
2. Fools are often hotheaded and self-confident. They are not careful about their actions and speech. Since fools find trouble easily, they always seem to be angry at someone or about something.
- 
3. 1. Fools are prideful and have difficulty admitting they are wrong. Fools would rather stick with their opinion or perspective, even if it is wrong, than humble themselves and admit their errors (Proverbs 13:19).
  2. Fools are quick to quarrel (Proverbs 20:3).
  3. Fools are proud (Proverbs 28:26). All people, even the unsaved, find pride detestable in others.
  4. Fools are often uncontrolled in expressing their speech (Proverbs 29:11). They often express their feelings (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. The psalmist was praying that God would give him undivided devotion to His will and commands. The psalmist didn't want to continue to be plagued by double-mindedness or have his mind vascillating between

conflicting and competing desires. He wanted to have single-minded devotion to God.

6. The fool doesn't have anything significant to say about matters of importance or in the presence of knowledgeable people. His shallow thinking about life, his aversion to learning, and his preoccupation with his fanciful dreams that never materialize render him speechless in the presence of wisdom.
7.
  - a.
    1. Sport or fun (Proverbs 10:23).
    2. Something of little importance or something to be mocked (Proverbs 14:9).
    3. Joy or delight (Proverbs 15:21).
  - b.
    1. A Christian can evaluate his emotional response to the Lord's judgment of man's sin. If a believer feels that God is being too harsh with His judgment, it likely indicates that he regards sin too lightly.
    2. A Christian can determine if he has a proper view of sin by evaluating what makes him laugh or brings him joy. Does he rejoice over righteousness, the salvation of someone, or the restoration of a fallen believer, or does he laugh at the things that grieve God's heart and for which Christ died? Other answers could apply.
8.
  - a.
    1. Angry people are impulsive and display their foolishness to others (Proverbs 14:29).
    2. Quick-tempered people cause dissension and strife (Proverbs 15:18).
    3. Angry people will suffer punishment (Proverbs 19:19).
    4. Any fool can be angry and start a fight (Proverbs 20:3).
  - b. Answers will vary.
9.
  - a.
    1. A man's pride will lead him to destruction (Proverbs 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 their downfall. Pride causes people to avoid reaching out to others in need.
    2. No man should be boastful about what he is going to do or accomplish because no one knows the future (Proverbs 27:1).