

CHARACTER MATTERS Text: Proverbs 1:20–33

Character Types in Proverbs

1. **Wouldn't it be helpful to know how to handle any problem in life?**
 - a. How to make the right choices in life? How to find true happiness in life?
How to navigate the storms of life
 2. **The Purpose of Proverbs is to Give You Wisdom from Above**
 - a. Using a teaching tool of 'Proverbs' *A Crystalized Statement of Distilled Truth.*
"A short statement based on long experience."
 2. **Most proverbs are in the form of Hebrew Parallelism:**
A teaching tool for seeing things from several levels and different angles.
 - 1) **Synonymous:** 2 parallel statements that teach one truth (11:25)
 - 2) **Contrasting:** 2 Contrasting statements that teach one truth (10:17)
 - 3) **Comparative:** 2 Different Truths with a Common Denominator (10:18)
 - 4) **Progressive:** 2 Different lines that complete one another (19:20; 13:14)
 - 5) **Analogy:** 2 Lines that use an illustration to emphasize a truth (10:26; 25:28)
 - 6) **Consequences:** cause and effect (26:27)
 - 7) **Characterization:** classifying people, actions and behavior (1:22)
 3. **All these proverbs are intended to teach us what wisdom is and what it is not**
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I. CHARACTER TYPES

A. THE CHARACTER TYPES IN PROVERBS (1:22)

One of the most effective ways to learn is through Character Study

1. **WISE:** are known for their Honesty, Humility, Faithfulness, Moral Integrity, Hard Work, and a Proper Respect & Honor for God.
2. **FOOLISH:** The Simple, Fool, Scoffer, Trouble-maker, Stubborn, Lazy, Miser, Seducer, Scoffer, Gossip, Glutton, Drunkard, Tale-bearer and Slanderer

B. ALL DESCRIBED FOR THE PURPOSE OF TEACHING WISDOM

1. **The Wise have the self-awareness & desire to self-correct & adjust course**
 - a) **There were 3 brothers who grew up with an alcoholic father who would often come home angry and drunk...**
 - The Older Brother was a teenager & stood up to him w/ confrontation and anger
 - The Middle Brother learned to appease his dad to keep the peace
 - The Younger Brother hid from his dad and avoided the conflict.
- >So it is no surprise that when they were older:**
- The Older brother dealt with problems through conflict and anger
 - the Middle by appeasing and compromise
 - The younger by hiding and avoiding problems.

2. A child psychologist identified 3 basic temperaments of children, as seen in how they respond to adversity.

- Some Respond with **Anxiety** and **Withdrawal**
- Some with **Aggression** and **Assertive Action**
- Some with **Optimism** with an effort to succeed through being social & cordial

3. Each Default Temperament works well in some situations, but not others.

So unless the Parents train their child, then their natural temperament will dominate and they won't learn how to act wisely in all situations.¹

Life is a process of growth—in maturity, awareness, understanding, Wisdom
Wisdom is knowing how to respond appropriately in all situations

To become wise: the anxious must learn to be bolder.

The bold must learn to be more cautious. The overly optimistic more thoughtful.

II. CHARACTER CONTRASTS

A. THE SIMPLE [פְּתִי (pě·tî) strongs #6612]

1. The First Stage of the Fool is called The Simple

- a) The Hebrew word translated *simple* in Proverbs is Defined: *“simple, naive, i.e., pertaining to persons that are easily deceived or persuaded, showing lack of wisdom and understanding, yet having some capacity to change” (DBL)* ²

2. These are the least hardened fools in Proverbs...

- a) Not yet a fully arrogant fool
b) so there is still hope that they will learn and change... **(1:4)**

3. But they are most naive and gullible...

- a) With only a shallow or superficial understanding of the way the world works.

4. Being Naive they Believe Everything They Hear (14:15)

- a) Especially if it is what they WANT to Hear!

5. They Have Not Yet Learned to Think For Themselves (14:15, 18)

- a) It is so much easier to let others think for us than to think for ourselves
Especially if it's what we want to Think or Want to Hear.

- **Do you control your thoughts? —or do your thoughts control you?**
- **COGNITIVE FUSION is when Your Thoughts Become Your Reality.**
- **When a person cannot separate what they think from what is real.**
- **In Other Words: — Just because you think something doesn't make it true.**

¹ Psychologist Jerome Kagan, cited by Timothy Keller, God's Wisdom for Navigating Life, p.10

² Dictionary of Biblical Languages, James Swanson

> **KING SAUL** was the King of Israel and stood head and shoulders above everyone else
But he became jealous of young David when David got more attention than he did.
He became Paranoid of his power and tried to kill his greatest warrior David!

6. This makes the Simple Susceptible to Manipulation (18:17, 13 ESV)

a) They can be Easily Impressed by People and Susceptible to Manipulation

> **KING HEZEKIAH** was not evil or wicked, but after God healed him and gave him
15 more years to live—the Babylonian ambassadors came to visit claiming
they were concerned about his health. He melted from their flattery and
showed them all the gold of the temple—which they later took to Babylon!

**7. Being Spiritually Immature they lack any awareness of the danger or the
consequences of their selfish choices (22:3)**

> **LOT: Was Not wicked or evil—but he lacked spiritual maturity...**

He was so blessed that His herdsmen began fighting with Abraham's herdsmen
over the limited resources of the area.

Abraham gave him first choice and he chose the land of Sodom.

Lot Lacked the wisdom to realize the long-term effects his choice would have.

WISDOM sees beyond the apparent to that which is real.

8. Being Selfish and Shallow they are willful and irresponsible (1:32)

a) You might think SIMPLE and NAIVE means INNOCENT...

b) But really this is a person who is gullible, and without moral direction so they often
wander aimlessly into traps of wickedness. (7:7-8)

9. The Simple Are Not Morally Grounded in Truth...

a) So they're easily swept away by every celebrity cause or trending spiritual fad
(Ephesians 4:14)

> **This leads to: 'Stockholm Syndrome Christianity'...**

- In 1973 two convicts robbed a bank in Stockholm Sweden and locked up four bank employees hostage for 6 days.
- When they were released, they refused to testify against their captives and even raised money for his defense.
- Stockholm Syndrome is a term to describe when hostages begin to sympathize with, and take on the belief system of their captors.
- Stockholm Syndrome Christians are more interested in the belief system of the world than with their faith in God.
- Instead of defending the truth to the world, they defend the world against the truth.
- Instead of being missionaries to spread the gospel to all the world, they spread the godless ideologies of the world into the church!

10. John Warns us of This (1 John 2:15–17)

Falling in Love w/ the World Organized in Rebellion Against God

III. CHARACTER TEST

A. THE TEST

1. We All Need Course Corrections Throughout Our Life

- a) An Airplane traveling only 1 degree off course doesn't seem like much...
- b) But over the course of a long flight, 1 degree can be hundreds of miles off course

2. The Measure of one's Wisdom can be seen in how they receive a rebuke.

How will they respond to the correction of Truth? (9:8–9)

The Fool

- Despises Wisdom and Correction
- They Hates Them for it
- Always Right in their Own Eyes
- React Defensively with Scorn
- Refuse to Listen
- Will try to drag them into an argument
- Leads others astray along with them
- Will verbally attack others rather than face their own failures.

The Wise

- Learn from Correction and Discipline
- Love them more for their rebuke.
- Take the wisdom to heart, and become even wiser.
- Seek Wisdom & spend time with the Wise
- Don't take offense to criticism but learns from it
- (Proverbs 10:17)

“Those who never retract their opinions, love themselves more than they love the truth.” (Joseph Joubert, 1754–1804)

3. NAMAAN was the Captain of the Syrian Army

- a) But He was also suffering from a Terrible Case of Leprosy.
- b) A Hebrew servant girl told him of a prophet who could heal him
- c) He traveled all the way to Israel to meet the prophet Elisha
- d) But Elisha doesn't even greet him, he sends a servant (2 Kings 5:9–12)

4. Naaman is angry! He didn't like they way he was treated.

He though the prophet would do some great thing!

- a) He's about to leave in anger and never come back
- b) but he has a wise servant (2 Kings 5:13–14)

5. Naaman learned something of eternal value! (Proverbs 3:7–8)

B. THE THEME

1. A Wise Path — the Narrow Way that Leads to Life

2. A Foolish Path — the Broad Way that Leads to Destruction

3. A Choice We Must All Make — A Decision That Determines Our Destiny

CONCLUSION:

1. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

2. Trust in the Lord – not in your Self