

Foolproof Your Life

Proverbs 18

“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid” (Prov 12:1).

Foolproof your life. Take the road less stupid.

We might be taken aback by a word like stupid. But the language is meant to be jarring. It's supposed to get our attention. It's not just 'meh' to go against God's word, it's stupid.

Main Idea: Proverbs provides wisdom for living a thriving life under God's control; so, we pursue God's wisdom.

Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment. ² A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion. ³ When wickedness comes, contempt comes also, and with dishonor comes disgrace. ⁴ The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook. ⁵ It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the righteous of justice. ⁶ A fool's lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating.

⁷ A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul. ⁸ The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body. ⁹ Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys. ¹⁰ The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe. ¹¹ A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination. ¹² Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.

¹³ If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. ¹⁴ A man's spirit will endure sickness, but a crushed spirit who can bear? ¹⁵ An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. ¹⁶ A man's gift makes room for him and brings him before the great. ¹⁷ The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him. ¹⁸ The lot puts an end to quarrels and decides between powerful contenders.

¹⁹ A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle. ²⁰ From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips. ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. ²² He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD. ²³ The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly. ²⁴ A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

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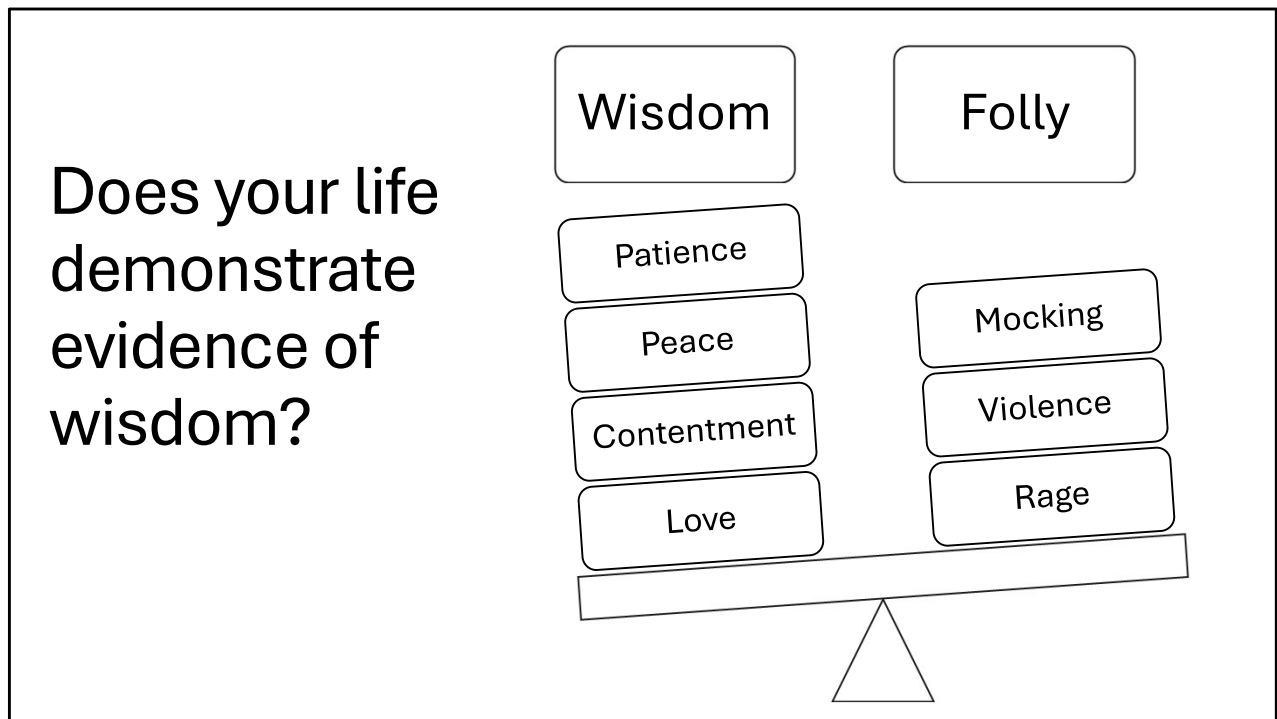
1. Build character with wisdom (vv. 2-3, 9, 12).
2. Choose your relationships carefully (vv. 1, 24).
3. Control your words or they'll control you (vv. 4-8).

1. Build character with wisdom (vv. 2-3, 9, 12).

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God produces character within us (1:7; Gal 5:22f).

- i. Fear of the Lord is the foundation of our character (1:7).
- ii. Self-control is better than a strength (16:32; 25:28).
- iii. Doing right is more acceptable than sacrifice (21:3; 2:9)
- iv. Contentment with God > wealth and turmoil (15:16).
- v. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Gal 5:22-23).



Now the **works of the flesh** are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.²² But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Write your sins down, make a sinvintory...

Strive to be more like Christ or you'll drift away.

- i. Watch out for *respectable sins* and *fashionable excess*.
- ii. Cultivate a superior affection for heavenly realities to naturally push out lesser desires (1Jn 2:15).
- iii. Leave space for God to produce fruit in your life.

“The expulsive power of a new affection” teaches that a sinful desires are not overcome by force but by being replaced by a stronger, more compelling love for God. Rather than focusing on the worthlessness of the world, cultivate a superior affection for heavenly realities, which naturally pushes out lesser desires.

--Thomas Chalmers (d. 1847)

1Jn 2:15

19th-century Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers, "fashionable excess" describes the point at which an overabundance of worldly pleasures leads to a spiritual and emotional hollowness

Respectable sins are sins the church has come to accept.

Paul uses 4 verbs here...

Walk in the Spirit (**v. 16**)

Be led by the Spirit (**v. 18**)

Live by the Spirit (**v. 25a**)

Keep in step with the Spirit (**v. 25b**) – military term meaning “to stand in a row”

2. Choose your relationships carefully (vv. 1, 24).

Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment... ²⁴ A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Cultivate relationships God's way

- i. Choose good friends to become wise (Prov 13:20).
- ii. Isolation destroys us through lack of accountability (18:1)
- iii. Sharpen one another for the Lord (27:17).

We can only become what God intends us to become, in the context of relationship with others (1Co 12:12f).

God mixed us up for our benefit (15-27).

Each part has a place (17, 19).

We need each other to function properly (21).

We're unified in Christ, by the Spirit (1Co 12:12f).

God mixed us together, for our benefit (1Co 12:15-27).

Each part has its own unique function (1Co 12:17, 19).

We need one another to function properly (1Co 12:21).

Weaker members are indispensable (1Co 12:22-23).

Find friends that push you towards Christ.

- i. Reject the folly of isolation: it rejects mutual counsel, relational growth, and accountability.
- ii. Invest in your group.
- iii. Find a friend who will tell you, “that’s dumb!”

3. Death and life are in the tongue (vv. 4-8, 13, 21).

⁴ The words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook. ⁵ It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the righteous of justice. ⁶ A fool's lips walk into a fight, and his mouth invites a beating. ⁷ A fool's mouth is his ruin, and his lips are a snare to his soul... ¹³ If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame... ²¹ Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

Words and wisdom are inseparable.

- i. Words heal, kill, destroy, build up, encourage and tear down (15:1; 10:11; 18:21).
- ii. Saying less is usually better (10:19; 17:27–28).
- iii. Tell the Truth and your words endure forever (12:19).
 But *do it with gentleness* (15:4; 12:18).
 And *listen first* (18:13; 29:20)

Words command great power and cause much destruction (James 3:1-8).

Words can destroy us.
(James 3...)

Careless words cause great fires

(vv. 5-6).

Unrighteousness flows from our lips (v. 6).

Words stain the whole body (v. 6; 1:26-27).

Words damage our lives (v. 6b).

No human has tamed the tongue (v. 8).

It is a *restless* evil, full of deadly poison (v. 8; 1 Pt 5:8)

Control your words or they'll control you.

- i. Check your heart, words flow from it (Jam 3:9-12).
- ii. Before speaking ... T.H.I.N.K.
- iii. Encourage more than you complain/judge.

Today, decide pursue God's wisdom.