

## I Am That Fool

### (Week 4) I Trust Myself

#### I. I AM THE FOOL THAT...

##### A. ...TRUSTS In Myself

*Proverbs 28:26 (CSB)* The one who trusts in himself is a fool, but one who walks in wisdom will be safe.

**But WHY is the one who trusts in himself a fool? Shouldn't we trust ourselves?** How can anyone walk or run, or do much of anything else, if he or she doesn't learn to trust his or her ability to put one foot in front of the other with confidence?

**Don't miss the CONTEXT.** The fool described here is contrasted with the wise. In Proverbs the wise are those who TRUST God, and God's instructions.

The problem with trusting ourselves is that we tend to trust ourselves more than we trust God. We foolishly choose our way of "happy" over his way of "holy".

Trusting our "wisdom" more than God's "wisdom" is what is in view here.

**The fool fails to remember** that God's wisdom is greater than all the collective wisdom of all the minds he ever created ... multiplied by—oh, I don't know—infinity?! So, why is it that sometimes I'd rather trust my teeny weeny little brain over his mind? And yet, I still do it. I'm that fool.

My way of "happy" often sacrifices a better future happiness on the altar of the present moment. His way of "holy" and "happy" never does this.

Do you ever make a sacrifice of your future on the altar of the present?

I am that fool who has sacrificed a greater good for a momentary and fleeting kind of happiness. It doesn't take very long to regret it. Yet, I stumble repeatedly over this kind of thing. I often don't understand why I do it even when deep down I know better.

- Maybe you get this. Were you ever caught by your parents doing something completely wrong and foolish, and your parents asked something like, "*What were you thinking? Why on earth did you do such a thing?*"
- And how did you answer? Was your answer as profound as my frequent answer to such a question? I would answer with an exasperated, and pathetic, "*I don't know.*"
  - Here's one example of my foolishness (if you have been here awhile you may remember this true story): [Tell story of punching finger holes through Japanese "shoji doors" (these are sliding panels made of thin strips of wood creating a grid on which sheets of rice paper are applied).
  - Have you ever done something you know was wrong, regretted it, but looking back you don't really know why you did what you did?
  - I'm that fool.
  - At the moment I was trusting some self deceiving lie? It may have been a dumb lie, like, "This is fun to poke a whole in. It makes a popping sound."

- Perhaps if you've ever popped bubble wrap and liked it, you could maybe sorta kinda understand...or not.
- My parents apparently didn't like to pop bubble wrap.

## I AM THE FOOL THAT...

### B. ...Trusts My HEART

Although I don't understand why I still choose to be foolish sometimes, the Bible explains why rather well.

*Jeremiah 17:9 (CSB)* **The heart** is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?

*Mark 7:21–23 (CSB)* For **from within**, out of people's **hearts**, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, <sup>22</sup> adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things **come from within** and defile a person."

My foolishness is the result of sin corrupting me from within. Whether you know it or not, believe it or not, we all have this problem. I know, you never riddled your good neighbors' walls with holes, but my guess is you did some foolish thing that you can't explain very well why you did it.

God clearly addressed this problem.

*Proverbs 3:5 (ESV)* Trust in the Lord with **all your heart**, and do not lean on your own understanding.

**Who do you trust more? Yourself or God?** Trust is a relationship issue.

- Why do we trust ourselves more when ...
  - we know that we have often let ourselves down...
  - we know our own choices have betrayed our best interests
  - we know some of our choices did great damage to ourselves and those we love

Isn't that interesting? It wasn't just when we were kids and mom asked us "Why in the world did you do that!?" Don't we still do it? And yet we tend to trust ourselves more than God.

**What is this foolishness?** Is it fear of losing control? Is it pride? Is it the fact we barely know God, and he is more abstract?

## I AM THE FOOL THAT...

### C. ...Leans on MY UNDERSTANDING

*Proverbs 3:5 (ESV)* Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not **lean on your own understanding**.

**TRUSTING God half heartedly leads to all kinds of problems.** This tendency of ours to be half hearted in trusting God is exacerbated by our tendency to lean on our own understanding. Don't do it.

Which way do you lean?

**Leaning away from God comes in many forms of idolatry.** *Leaning on your own understanding* is idolatry. To play on the word here a moment, the emphasis is on the "I" in Idolatry. "I"dolatry is a self-centered life, a self-centered worship, a worship of self, it is "I"-dolatry.

Don't misunderstand Proverbs 3:5 which says "do not lean on your own understanding." God never asks us to throw out our minds.

Jesus clearly instructed:

**Matthew 22:37 (CSB)** ... “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and **with all your mind.**”

A wholehearted love, includes loving God with all my mind.

We need to move away from the small-minded world of self-help to the large world of God's help.

You probably have an idea about that “one thing” that could help you. Have you thought about why you are still reluctant to get started on that “one thing”?

Take a moment to write down that “one thing”. Remind yourself to think about what is getting in the way.

**I AM THE FOOL THAT...**

**D. ...IGNORES God**

**Proverbs 3:6 (ESV)** In all your ways **acknowledge him**, and he will make straight your paths.

The opposite of “*ignore*” is to “*pay attention*”.

The word for this is “*acknowledge*”.

The word translated “*acknowledge*” here means: *A knowing or mental awareness of something usually by means of personal experience.*

That’s a mouthful. But it isn’t hard. We need to turn and pay attention to God. He is someone to know. Turn your thoughts to him. There are many ways to do this. But we stumble here because the words are so all encompassing.

“*In all your ways acknowledge him...*” Does that seem impossible to you?

It’s not. And there is good news here.

**II. I AM THAT FOOL, BUT THE GOOD NEWS IS...**

**A. God STILL wants ME**

God still wants a personal relationship with me. He wants a personal relationship with us. He wants to be acknowledged by ME and YOU personally

**Proverbs 3:6 (ESV)** In all your ways acknowledge him...

God wants to be acknowledged by me, frequently, and often, *in all my ways.*

**But wait, the good news gets even better than that!**

**B. God provides HIMSELF as my solution**

**Proverbs 3:6 (ESV)** In all your ways acknowledge him, and **he will make straight your paths.**

God's solution is to provide himself as the solution in a personal relationship. Think about that. This is a gift of grace.

God himself will straighten out our foolish ways if we make it our central habit to acknowledge him!!

**But how do we do this?** Make it a habit to check in with God about everything. This doesn't add time, it saves time through the use of frequent little redirecting moments "acknowledging him." This habit centers you and energizes you in "all your ways".

Rather than spinning your wheels, or going off track in the weeds far away from His way, this practice keeps us more effectively living in his way, on his path of wisdom. Can you imagine how much time you save doing this?

"In ALL your ways":

- In your **discretionary time**,
- In your entertainment choices
- In your relationships
- In the ways you cope when your bored, or stressed

It may sound like adding a bunch of time, but it doesn't. It actually *redeems* the time! It is the ultimate time *saver*!

You aren't trying to do this on your own power. This simply describes what it looks like to be in a relationship with God.

- God designed you for this!
- God saved you to make this possible.
- God will help you if you will just turn to him, **again and again.**
- Let's practice this right now—let's acknowledge him together.