Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

2 November 2014 Message 14 of 17

NLT 40 Minutes

**Being Foolish with a Fool**

Title

***Ecclesiastes 10:12-20***

**Topic:** Criticism

**Subject:** How should we deal with a fool?

**Complement:** Don’t criticize your foolish leader.

**Purpose:** The listeners will stop criticizing their foolish leaders.

# Introduction

### Interest: Today I will speak on something I do not recall ever hearing a message about! • Fools! We all have to deal with fools.

Twain

Been

Know

Black  
• Fools

#### We all know one.

#### We’ve all been one! I’ve been a fool this very week! I can speak with experience!

#### Mark Twain said, “It’s easier to fool people than to convince them that they have been fooled.”

### Need: Can you *spot* a fool? Do you know how to *handle* a fool? If not, stay tuned!

Spot?

Handle?

### Review: What’s the context of this discussion of fools?

#### The past few months we have been addressing the book of Ecclesiastes. The theme is “work and wisdom don’t last.”

Enjoy work

Series

##### Solomon has told us to enjoy our work.

Balance

##### But keep it in balance with…

##### Relationships—especially with the wife of your youth!

MP

Relation-ships

##### One series on this book calls it, “How to Waste Your Life.” How? All work, no play, or looking to work and wisdom for ultimate satisfaction.

##### Better to live well, laugh often and love much!

Live-Laugh-Love

#### In our last message Solomon addressed the question, “Why doesn’t wisdom always lead to success?” Do you remember the answer?

Review of 9:10-10:10

MP

##### First, life is *unfair* (9:11–10:7).

##### Second, life is *uncertain* (10:8-11).

MP

##### So wisdom doesn’t guarantee success because life is unfair and uncertain (MI).

MI

#### The 9 verses we will address today continue that theme of “why wisdom doesn’t always lead to success” with a third answer. In a word, the answer is “fools.”

### Subject: How should we deal with a fool?

Subject

#### We all need to know how to deal with fools. There are plenty of them around.

#### My challenge in addressing this passage relevantly is to talk about fools without being foolish myself. How specific should I be? What one person thinks is a fool, another person considers a hero.

### Background: Despite the abundance of fools in our world, rarely do we describe foolishness for what it really is. But Solomon didn't mince any words when he spoke of fools. In fact, he paints a rather vivid picture of a fool in Ecclesiastes.

Wisdom on Fools

#### "In a day of soft diplomacy, straight-talk reality is rare. It seems that most statements are now couched in diplomatic terms so as not to offend anyone…" (Swindoll, *LOTRE*, 298).

#### Yet Solomon knew about fools. His own brother Adonijah qualified as a fool.

#### His son Rehoboam also qualified and Solomon himself also played the fool.

### Preview: Today we'll not only discover how to recognize a fool but see how to deal with a fool, especially when he's in authority over us.

Preview  
• Spot  
• Do

### Text: Let's turn to Ecclesiastes 10:12-20 to see the characteristics of the fool.

(How can you *identify* a fool? Fortunately, Solomon gave us a…)

# I. Description: The speech and actions of a fool are destructive (10:12-19).

MP

[Fools both speak and act in a way that ruins.]

## A fool’s speech is destructive (10:12-14a).

Speech

### A wise man’s speech wins him favor (10:12a).

12a

### A fool’s speech hurts himself (10:12b)—like a snake eating itself!

• 12b

Destructive

### A fool’s speech hurts others (10:13-14).

Others

13

#### Quality: Fools begin and end with foolishness (10:13).

##### A fool's words start with stupidity—not sensibility (10:13a).

##### A fool's words end with evil insanity—not good sense (10:13b).

• 14

#### Quantity: Fools talk too much despite their ignorance of the future (10:14).

##### Fools talk too much (10:14a).

• Too much

• Ignorant

• Death

##### Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of the future like us all (10:14b).

##### Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of what happens after they die (10:14c).

## A fool’s work is destructive (10:15-19).

Work

### Work so exhausts fools that they can’t do easy tasks (10:15)—I once painted a house with a fool. I did 90% of the work and we both got the same pay!

15

### Foolish leaders hurt their subordinates (10:16-19).

Hurt others

#### Incompetent, undisciplined leaders hurt their subordinates (10:16).

• 16

##### Someone has said, “Hurt people hurt people.” Isn’t that so true?

Hurt people

##### Fools often make more work for the people under them! [Read cartoon]

Dilbert

#### Competent, disciplined leaders help their subordinates (10:17).

17

#### A foolish leader ruins people and depletes their resources (10:18-19).

##### A fool's laziness results in ruin and loss of protection (10:18)—plus they never clean up their own messes.

Messes

18

##### A fool's time is wasted in partying (10:19a)—In fact, a recent study showed that rock stars live 20 years less than the rest of us [read report on slide].

19

Rock star

##### A fool believes that having enough money will solve all his problems (10:19b).

Top

(Oftentimes these fools get to the top—not through their own doing, but due to favoritism by someone with power. This has been epitomized by the famous “post turtle.” *You know he didn’t get there by himself, doesn’t belong up there, and doesn’t know what to do while he is up there. Everyone wonders why anyone put him up there in the first place.*

Turtle

We’ve seen the major part of this passage now that describes the fool. If your leaders were placed by favoritism and showed the destructive speech and actions of a fool, it’d be tempting to criticize them. Solomon, aware of such a strong temptation, warns against speaking evil of inadequate leaders.)

MPI

# II. Warning: Don't even privately criticize foolish authorities because they may find out (10:20).

MP

[Watch your tongue concerning your boss—or it might bite you.]

20a

20b

## Do not curse a man in authority even in the privacy of your bedroom (10:20a).

## We shouldn't curse authorities because an unknown source may reveal our criticisms (10:20b).

Subject

(So let’s return to where we started with the question, how should we deal with a fool? The answer?)

# Conclusion

### Don’t criticize your foolish leader (Main Idea). When it comes to the superior with whom you disagree…keep your thoughts to yourself (restatement).

MI

### In this latter half of Ecclesiastes 10 Solomon has done two things:

#### He first described the fool's destructive speech and actions (10:12-19).

MPI

MPII

#### He then warned you to keep criticisms of your foolish leader to yourself (10:20).

### Have you criticized a foolish superior? Someone noted, "It takes little size to criticize."

Criticized?

#### Have you been critical of your church leaders, even in private?

#### Do you join the company gossip about your boss?

#### How quickly do you judge the decisions of your PM, president, judges, government officials, or other leader?

### What should you do about hating your boss—or other superior—or even subordinate or relative or someone else?

Hate boss

#### Keep your cool. What good purpose has godless anger ever achieved?

Keep cool

#### Choose your words carefully as they can hurt or heal.

Choose

##### Hurtful words wound more than a physical punch.

Wound

Embrace

##### Wise words embrace and heal—so sleep and pray on that email you wrote!

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### In our last message Solomon addressed the question, “Why doesn’t wisdom always lead to success?” Do you remember the answer?

#### First, life is unfair (9:11–10:7).

#### Second, life is uncertain (10:8-11).

#### So wisdom doesn’t guarantee success because life is unfair and uncertain (MI).

### You might say that the 9 verses we will address today continue that theme of “why wisdom doesn’t always lead to success” with a third answer. In a word, the answer is “fools.”

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### We all need to know how to deal with fools. There are plenty of them around.

### My challenge in addressing this passage relevantly is to talk about fools without being foolish myself. How specific should I be? What one person thinks is a fool, another person considers a hero.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Solomon’s own son Adonijah qualified as a fool.

### His son Rehoboam also met the qualifications!

# Questions

### What is verse 12a saying about the wise man’s words?

#### The wise man’s words are “gracious” (NAU, NIV) means that the words have an admirable *quality*.

#### The wise man’s words “bring approval” (NLT) means that the words have an admirable *result*.

##### The Hebrew word for "gracious" can also mean "favor" (Prov. 13:15) or "esteem" (Prov. 22:1). These alternative meanings better contrast the wise man's speech with the destructive words of the fool in the next phrase (cf. *BKC*, 1002).

##### *BKC* notes, “**A wise man’s** words are **gracious** (or, better, “win him favor”; Prov. 13:15 [“favor”]; 22:1 [“esteemed”] make similar use of this Heb. word NEj), but a fool’s words are self-destructive (i.e., they consume him).”

###### “A person with good sense is **respected**; a treacherous person is headed for destruction” (Prov. 13:15 NLT).

###### “Choose a good reputation over great riches; **being held in high esteem** is better than silver or gold” (Prov. 22:1 NLT).

##### This sense of *result* where others **approve** of the wise man better contrasts with how fools have the opposite *result* of being **destroyed** by their words.

### How do a fool's words "consume him” (12:12b)?

### Do foolish people really talk more than wise people? Why or why not?

### How does a fool's work exhaust him?

### Is Solomon being sarcastic here about saying that money solves everything (10:19b)? In what way is this foolish philosophy wrong?

### What specific sources of information might be referred to as a "bird of the heavens" (10:20a)?

### How well do fools take criticism (10:20b)? What results from fools hearing criticism about them?

### "If a fool ever discovers that someone has been confiding with another person concerning his unwise behavior, look out! Fools will retaliate; count on it. Therefore, when we must deal with a fool, confidentiality is often the best approach to take" (*LOTRE Study Guide*, 107).

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

MI: Don’t criticize your foolish leader.

Let your foolish leader hang himself.

# Possible Illustrations

#### In 1983 a fool was deposed of his power in the small quasi-republic of the Philippines. The U.S. press was merciless in exposing his flagrant rule and materialistic bent: 3,000 pairs of shoes for his wife, untold numbers of luxurious jewels, millions of dollars in Swiss bank accounts, an election filled with flagrant fraud.

# Reaction to Gross Pictures Can Predict Political Leaning

It's all about how your brain unconsciously reacts

http://img2-azcdn.newser.com/getimage.aspx?mediaid=982199&width=40&height=40&crop=Y

By [Evann Gastaldo](http://www.newser.com/user/3732/1/evann-gastaldo.html),  Newser Staff

Posted Oct 30, 2014 3:50 PM CDT

(Newser) – What can pictures of maggot infestations, mutilated animals, dirty toilets, and rotting corpses tell you about a person's political affiliation? A lot, apparently. Researchers led by Virginia Tech studied the reactions of people's brains as the subjects looked at disgusting images, and they found that the strength of the brain responses could predict—with 95% to 98% accuracy—whether a person was liberal or conservative. After looking at the images, subjects filled out a political ideology inventory; researchers found that conservatives' brain responses to the repulsive images tended to be more magnified. However, that doesn't necessarily mean conservatives consciously ranked the images more disgusting than liberals did, just that their neural reactions were more amplified, a [press release](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2014-10/cp-loc102314.php" \t "_blank) explains.

"Remarkably, we found that the brain's response to a single disgusting image was enough to predict an individual's political ideology," says the lead researcher. Why? As the lead researcher [explains](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2014-10/vt-brt102914.php" \t "_blank), previous research has found political affiliation to be "almost as heritable as height," and disgust reactions are also likely inherited. So, researchers suggest, it's possible that our political ideologies are "mapped onto" passed-down neural responses that originally served to protect our ancestors from contamination and disease. That means "some 'knee-jerk' reactions to political issues may be simply that—reactions," the lead researcher says. What can we learn from this as we head into Election Day? "Think, don't just react," he suggests. (Your [preference for Dunkin' or Starbucks](http://www.newser.com/story/148329/prefer-dunkin-donuts-you-might-be-a-republican.html) might also say something about your political leanings.)

# Rock Stars Really Do Die Young(er)

But they're not particularly vulnerable at 27, researcher notes

http://img2-azcdn.newser.com/getimage.aspx?mediaid=982199&width=40&height=40&crop=Y

By [Evann Gastaldo](http://www.newser.com/user/3732/1/evann-gastaldo.html),  Newser Staff

Posted Oct 29, 2014 8:20 AM CDT

(Newser) – The idea that rock stars die young is actually true, according to a new study out of Australia. Though most rock stars don't enter the so-called "27 Club," whose members all died at that age (Kurt Cobain, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, [Amy Winehouse](http://www.newser.com/story/124136/amy-winehouse-dead-at-27-found-in-her-apartment.html), Jim Morrison), the study finds that they do die much earlier than the average person. Researchers looked at 12,665 music industry deaths since 1950 and found that the average male musician lives just into his late 50s, while the average female musician lives only into her early 60s, the [Wall Street Journal](http://online.wsj.com/articles/the-27-club-is-a-myth-but-rock-stars-do-die-younger-1414490051?mod=WSJ_hp_EditorsPicks" \t "_blank) reports. Compare that to the average age of death for American men (75) and women (80) who are not in the industry. The study found that the rates of suicide, homicide, and fatal accidents are all significantly higher among rock stars than among the general population, the lead researcher writes at the [Conversation](http://theconversation.com/stairway-to-hell-life-and-death-in-the-pop-music-industry-32735" \t "_blank).

"Across the seven decades studied, popular musicians' lifespans were up to 25 years shorter than the comparable US population," she writes. Why? She thinks it has to do with the lifestyle. "The industry itself actually supports outrageous behavior. Drugs are very prevalent—young musicians often take uppers to perform and then party all night with alcohol and drugs," she tells the Journal. Add that to the general stress of touring, and you have a recipe for disaster—particularly because the industry doesn't provide enough emotional support, she says. Rock stars "dream of being at the peak and that all of their psychological problems will somehow be relieved by adoration and squillions of dollars. What they actually come to is a sense of emptiness and an incredibly demanding lifestyle, where everybody is telling them what to do." ([Lonely people also may not live as long](http://www.newser.com/story/148430/lonely-you-may-not-live-as-long.html).)

Quality: Fools begin and end with foolishness (10:13).

A fool's words start with stupidity—not sensibility (10:13a).

A fool's words end with evil insanity—not good sense (10:13b).

Quantity: Fools talk too much despite their ignorance of the future (10:14).

Fools talk too much (10:14a).

Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of the future like us all (10:14b).

Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of what happens after they die (10:14c)Possible Applications

### Text

**Being Foolish with a Fool**

***Ecclesiastes 10:12-20***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The speech and actions of a fool are destructive, but one should not be critical of a fool in authority (10:12-20).

# I. Description: The speech and actions of a fool are destructive (10:12-19).

## A fool’s speech is destructive (10:12-14a).

### A wise man’s speech wins him favor (10:12a).

### A fool’s speech hurts himself (10:12b).

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## A fool’s work is destructive (10:15-19).

### Work so exhausts fools that they can’t do easy tasks (10:15).

### Foolish leaders hurt their subordinates (10:16-19).

#### Incompetent, undisciplined leaders hurt their subordinates (10:16).

#### Competent, disciplined leaders help their subordinates (10:17).

#### A foolish leader ruins people and depletes their resources (10:18-19).

##### A fool's laziness results in ruin and loss of protection (10:18).

##### A fool's time is wasted in partying (10:19a).

##### A fool believes that having enough money will solve all his problems (10:19b).

# II. Warning: Don't even privately criticize foolish authorities because they may find out (10:20).

## Do not curse a man in authority even in the privacy of your bedroom (10:20a).

## We shouldn't curse authorities because an unknown source may reveal our criticisms (10:20b).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will stop criticizing their foolish leaders

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: We all have to deal with fools.

### Need: Despite the abundance of fools in our world, rarely do we describe foolishness for what it really is.

### Subject: How should we deal with a fool?

### Background: Solomon didn't mince any words when he spoke of fools. In fact, he paints a rather vivid picture of a fool in Ecclesiastes.

### Preview: Today we'll not only discover how to recognize a fool but see how to deal with a fool, especially when he's in authority over us.

### Text: Let's turn to Ecclesiastes 10:12-20 to see the characteristics of the fool.

# I. Description: The speech and actions of a fool are destructive (10:12-19).

## A fool’s speech is destructive (10:12-14a).

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#### Quality: Fools begin and end with foolishness (10:13).

##### A fool's words start with stupidity—not sensibility (10:13a).

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#### Quantity: Fools talk too much despite their ignorance of the future (10:14).

##### Fools talk too much (10:14a).

##### Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of the future like us all (10:14b).

##### Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of what happens after they die (10:14c).

## A fool’s work is destructive (10:15-19).

### Work so exhausts fools that they can’t do easy tasks (10:15).

### Foolish leaders hurt their subordinates (10:16-19).

#### Incompetent, undisciplined leaders hurt their subordinates (10:16).

#### Competent, disciplined leaders help their subordinates (10:17).

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##### A fool's laziness results in ruin and loss of protection (10:18).

##### A fool's time is wasted in partying (10:19a).

##### A fool believes that having enough money will solve all his problems (10:19b).

(If your leaders were characterized by such foolishness it would be tempting to criticize them. Solomon, aware of such a strong temptation, warns against speaking evil of inadequate leaders.)

# II. Warning: Don't even privately criticize foolish authorities because they may find out (10:20).

## Do not curse a man in authority even in the privacy of your bedroom (10:20a).

## We shouldn't curse authorities because an unknown source may reveal our criticisms (10:20b).

(How should we deal with a fool?)

# Conclusion

### Don’t criticize your foolish leader (Main Idea).

### In this latter half of Ecclesiastes 10 Solomon has done two things:

#### He first described the fool's destructive speech and actions (10:12-19).

#### He then warned you to keep criticisms of your foolish leader to yourself (10:20).

### Have you criticized a foolish superior? Someone noted, "It takes little size to criticize."

#### Have you been critical of your church leaders, even in private?

#### Do you join the company gossip about your boss?

#### How quickly do you judge the decisions of your PM, president, judges, government officials, or other leader?

### What should you do about hating your boss?

#### Keep your cool.

#### Choose your words carefully as they can hurt or heal.

##### Hurtful words wound more than a physical punch.

##### Wise words embrace and heal—so sleep and pray on that email you wrote!

### Prayer



**Rick Griffith**

2 November 2014

Message 14 of 17

**Being Foolish with a Fool**

***Ecclesiastes 10:12-20***

# Introduction

### We all have to deal with fools, but rarely do we admit it.

### How should we deal with a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

# I. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: The speech and actions of a fool are destructive (10:12-19).

## A fool’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is destructive (10:12-14a).

### A wise man’s speech wins him favor (10:12a).

### A fool’s speech hurts himself (10:12b).

### A fool’s speech hurts others (10:13-14).

#### Quality: Fools begin and end with foolishness (10:13).

#### Quantity: Fools talk too much despite their ignorance of the future (10:14).

##### Fools talk too much (10:14a).

##### Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of the future like us all (10:14b).

##### Fools talk on, despite being ignorant of what happens after they die (10:14c).

## A fool’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is destructive (10:15-19).

### Work so exhausts fools that they can’t do easy tasks (10:15).

### Foolish leaders hurt their subordinates (10:16-19).

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##### A fool's time is wasted in partying (10:19a).

##### A fool believes that having enough money will solve all his problems (10:19b).

# II. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_: Don't even privately criticize foolish authorities because they may find out (10:20).

## Do not curse a man in authority even in the privacy of your bedroom (10:20a).

## We shouldn't curse authorities because an unknown source may reveal our criticisms (10:20b).

(So how should we deal with a fool?)

# Conclusion

### Don’t \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ your foolish leader (Main Idea).

### Have you criticized a foolish superior? "It takes little size to criticize" (anonymous)

### What should you do about hating your boss?

#### Keep your cool.

#### Choose your words carefully as they can hurt or heal.

##### Hurtful words wound more than a physical punch.

##### Wise words embrace and heal—so sleep and pray on that email you wrote!

**Thought Questions**

1. Read Ecclesiastes 10:12-20 aloud. What traits of a fool can you discover in this passage? List as many as you can and contrast it with a wise person.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Fool** | **The Wise** |
| Speaks to his harm (12b) | Speaks to his benefit (12a) |
| Disdained by others (12b) | Esteemed by others (12a) |
| Based on foolish assumptions (13a) | Based on sensible assumptions |
| Results in chaos—communism (13b) | Results in order |
| Speaks much from ignorance (14a) | Speaks little from knowledge (14b) |
| Won’t consider results of beliefs (14b) | Speaks from humility regarding future (14b) |
| Poor work ethic (15) | Works hard |
| Lack of ambition lacks direction (15b) | Ambition gives direction |
| Remains a servant (16a) | Becomes a noble leader (17a) |
| Undiscerning when to celebrate (16b) | Celebrates at proper time (17b) |
| Insists on immediate gratification (16b) | Waits for gratification (17b) |
| Not motivated by laziness results (18) | Motivated by potential harm (14) |
| Procrastinator (18) | Proactive and industrious |
| Uses food & wine for indulgence (19a) | Uses food & wine productively |
| Acts inappropriately (19) | Acts appropriately |
| Thinks money solves all evils (19b) | Realistic view of money |
| Criticizes leaders (20a) | Resists criticizing authorities |
| Discredited before authorities (20b) | Praised by authorities |

1. How would you explain verse 19 to someone who uses this to support his materialism?

This is a sarcastic saying of the fool—not Solomon’s opinion

God says he meets all our needs (Phil. 4:19)

1. What mistake have you made in dealing with fools? What should you do now?

I have colored my wife’s opinion of authorities negatively but should highlight their positive traits instead