

# Trusting God's Guidance, part 2

"None is a fool always everyone sometimes."

George Herbert

## Proverbs 26:4-5, 11; 29:9 Christian Standard Bible

26:4 Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness  
or you'll be like him yourself.

5 Answer a fool according to his foolishness  
or he'll become wise in his own eyes...

11 As a dog returns to its vomit,  
so also a fool repeats his foolishness.

29:9 If a wise person goes to court with a fool,  
there will be ranting and raving but no resolution.<sup>[a]</sup>

### Footnotes

a. 29:9 Lit rest

### Something to think about...

Fools resist wisdom. Wise people soak it in.

If we are being foolish, in what ways are we resisting wisdom?

How have you seen others resist wisdom, and thus act foolishly? In what ways can we intentionally soak in wisdom?

 **NOTE:** The last few weeks of our devotionals will have a unique format, using a collection of proverbs with similar themes to help us cover the maximum amount of biblical ground as we finish up this study on WISDOM.

## A CLOSER LOOK: DEALING WITH FOOLS

No one wants to be called a fool, but like the George Herbert quote above, everyone takes their turn in foolishness. Today's devotional is a strategic look at dealing with "the fool" and the circumstances that dictate HOW we should engage him. Not every deviation from the path of wisdom is a leap into foolishness, but isn't it nice to know how to deal with it when we encounter it OR how to know if we ourselves are the fool in this story.

26:4-11. This sequence of verses warns of the risks involved in dealing with a fool. Verses 4 and 5 seem to be contradictory at first glance, but they simply present the two sides of dealing with fools. Sometimes it is best to argue on the fool's terms (v. 4), and sometimes it is better to avoid such a conflict (v. 5); it takes wisdom to know which verse applies to a given situation. The danger in descending to the level of the fool is that you may pick up his bad attitudes. But there are times when it is necessary to answer fools with arguments they understand because the rebuke won't be received in any other way. Paul used such "foolish" arguments in 2 Corinthians 11 and 12.

Proverbs 26:6-11 forms a series of analogies, explaining how aggravating a fool can be. Verse 11 shows that a fool does not learn from his mistakes. Just as a dog returns to its vomit (quoted in 2 Pet. 2:22), a fool reverts to his level, even when exposed to something better.

29:9. A dispute with a fool soon descends into an emotional brawl, even when it takes place in a court case. There is no objective, calm discussion but an emotional outburst. [Max Anders (2012). HOTC Vol. 13: Proverbs. B&H Publishing Group. Retrieved from <https://read.lifeway.com>]

**Anyone foolish enough to think he has all the answers causes trouble not only for himself  
but for everyone whom he encounters.**

## "LET US PRAY..."

Dear God, please help us to walk the path of wisdom to and to have the discernment to see foolishness around us. When we stumble upon it Lord, please help us to look to these scriptures to know how to navigate back to your wisdom and truth. Lord, please use this devotional to prevent us from being foolish ourselves and to recognize our own shortcomings as we deal with others with grace. AMEN

*NEXT WEEK... Trusting God's Guidance, part 3— Discernment & Understanding*

*The above devotional has been summarized and adapted from the Holman Old Testament Commentary on Proverbs cited below.  
[Max Anders (2012). HOTC Vol. 13: Proverbs. B&H Publishing Group.]*