

# PEARLS FROM PROVERBS – Lesson 8

## The Fool

By Beverly McKey

### I. INTRODUCTION

A. The book of Proverbs is a collection of truths addressing many different subjects.

1. Proverbs, by their nature, are intended to present general truth in short, easily remembered statements.
2. Because of this, the book of Proverbs addresses a wide range of subjects, often passing from one subject to another in a very short space, even from one verse to the next.
3. The ability to make practical application of knowledge offered in this book is the foundation of the Proverbs.
  - a. Though wisdom and knowledge go hand in hand, they are distinct qualities.
  - b. A person may possess great knowledge yet lack wisdom.
  - c. However, one cannot be truly wise without knowledge.
  - d. Wisdom, however, is not related to worldly knowledge but to the knowledge of God. **Proverbs 2:6** – *“For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding.”*
  - e. The knowledge God offers will lead to wisdom, but wisdom is the ability to understand and apply knowledge appropriately.

B. Folly (foolishness) is the opposite of wisdom and in this lesson we will be defining what foolishness is compared to wisdom.

1. The wise man learns, understands and lives by the precepts of God’s will.
2. The fool has no interest in the will of God.
3. The words “wise” or “wisdom” occur 125 times in Proverbs, while the words “fool”, “foolishness” or “folly” occur 97 times.
4. It is just as wise to learn what a fool does as it is to learn what a wise man does.
  - a. The truly wise person will desire to know both the way of wisdom, that he may follow it, and the way of folly, that he may avoid it.
  - b. This study focuses on the fool in Proverbs to help us:
    - 1) avoid being like him
    - 2) avoid the path he takes
    - 3) and learn how to interact with him appropriately

### II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FOOL

A. Proverbs describes the fool in a number of ways.

1. It addresses the things that make one a fool as well as some characteristics of those who are fools.
2. These descriptions show that no one is a fool by birth, but he becomes a fool by the choices that he makes.

B. Some characteristics of a “fool” to watch out for:

1. **Fools do not fear God** – This seems like a harsh, judgmental statement and yet when we read **Proverbs 1:7** we will see why this is true.
  - a. *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*
  - b. Since the fool despises wisdom and instruction, how can he fear (respect) God since he despises the very things that God’s word provides.
  - c. Solomon’s father, King David, also wrote a condemning statement about fools; in fact he repeated it twice:
    - 1) **Psalm 14:1** – *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ ”*
    - 2) **Psalm 53:1** – *“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ ”*
  - d. **Proverbs 1:29-32** – *“Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, <sup>30</sup> They would have none of my counsel and despised my every rebuke. <sup>31</sup> Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way, and be filled to the full with their own fancies. <sup>32</sup> For the turning away of the simple will slay them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them,”*
    - 1) This proverb is part of the passage that personifies Wisdom as a woman who calls out to everyone, including the simple and the fools.
    - 2) The fools, however, refused her message and despised her for rebuking their foolishness.
    - 3) It confirms also that the fools “*did not choose the fear of the Lord*”, instead they chose the world and its wisdom.
2. **Fools despise instruction** – This does not apply to those who have no access to proper instruction, but rather to the one who has no desire for instruction of any kind.
  - a. James confirms a that wisdom comes from God.
    - 1) **James 1:5** – *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”*
      - a) Those who have no access to knowledge are to be pitied and helped if possible.
      - b) However, the fools are what they are because of the attitude they take toward God and the instruction that would make them wise.
    - 2) Instead of a godly fear of the Lord that produces respect for His Word, the fool despises the instruction and wisdom that God would give.
    - 3) The Lord has provided many areas of life from which one may acquire wisdom, but the fool rejects them all.

- b. The fool even despises instruction from his parents.
- 1) **Proverbs 15:5** – “A fool despises his father’s instruction, but he who receives correction is prudent.”
  - 2) As with many positive qualities, for most people, wisdom begins to grow in the home but for some, so does foolishness.
    - a) God designed the home so that parents might instruct their children in the things they need to learn.
 

**Proverbs 3:12** – “For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father and son in whom he delights.”
    - b) The object of discipline from parents is to help their children overcome the foolishness of childhood.
      - i **Proverbs 13:24** – “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.”
      - ii **Proverbs 22:15** – “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.”
    - c) Ideally, that correction will work, but some children vigorously rebel against the teaching of their parents.
      - i **Proverbs 13:1** – “A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.”
      - ii **Proverbs 12:15** – “Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid.”
- c. The Fool has contempt for learning.
- 1) It is not that the fool is incapable of learning, but that his heart is not prepared to learn.
 

**Proverbs 17:16** – “Why is there in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom, since he has no heart for it?”
  - 2) While a fool may desire wisdom, he has no respect for the process of instruction necessary to achieve it and he cannot buy it.
3. **The Fool Seeks His Own Way At All Costs**
- a. The fool does not want to be instructed because he is sure that he knows all he needs to know.
    - 1) **Proverbs 12:15** – “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.”
    - 2) **Proverbs 27:22** – “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.”
  - b. The fool does not even learn from his own mistakes.
    - 1) **Proverbs 26:11** – “As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.”
    - 2) Most people have the ability to learn from experience that wise decisions have positive results and foolish decisions usually result in disaster.
    - 3) However, the fool repeatedly makes foolish choices in friends, in activities, in their career and even in their relationships.

- 4) They never learn from their disastrous decisions because they are absolutely sure that they are right, therefore, their failures must be the fault of other people.
- a) I have someone in my own family that fits this description.
- i He had no interest in education and barely graduated high school.
  - ii He made poor choices in friends.
  - iii He disrespected his parents, teachers and law enforcement.
  - iv He turned his back on the church by the time he was 18.
  - v He lost both of his hands in the Viet Nam war and he refused psychological counseling that could have helped his reintegration into civilian life.
  - vi Since he was guaranteed an above adequate income as a disabled veteran, he no incentive to work. While he was capable of working at many jobs, he always quit in a month or so.
  - vii With so much time on his hands, he was bored and he turned to more destructive habits including drugs and alcohol abuse.
  - viii He was an irresponsible husband and father and his children paid a high price for his foolishness.
  - ix His wife finally gave up and left him.
  - x He has spent ten years in prison and yet when he was released he returned to those same self destructive habits.
  - xi Now his health reflects the years of smoking and drinking and he is in very poor condition, and yet he still gravitates toward the same bad companions he has always sought.
  - xii He was given many chances to start over and correct his foolishness (especially by his mother).
  - xiii Each time we thought, "*Surely he has learned his lesson and he will straighten out his life*" – but he never did. What a sad waste of a life.
- b) The initial problem that lead down this path to destruction was that he turned his back on the church and on God just after graduating from high school.
- i He was attracted to the worldly people he associated with instead of Christians.
  - ii His life could have been great if he had followed the advice of David, Solomon and Jeremiah.
    1. **Psalm 119:5** – "*Oh, that my ways were directed to keep your statutes!*"
    2. **Psalm 119:133** – "*Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.*"

3. **Proverbs 3:6** – *“In all your ways acknowledge Him (God), and He shall direct your paths.”*
4. **Proverbs 16:9** – *“A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.”*
5. **Jeremiah 10:23** – *“O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.”*

#### 4. **Reproof And Rebuke Are Useless With Fools**

- a. The rejection of Divine wisdom for mankind leads to moral corruption.
  - 1) The fool in Proverbs demonstrates a greater desire for what is sinful than for the ways of righteousness.  
**Proverbs 10:23** – *“To do evil is like sport to a fool, but a man of understanding has wisdom.”*
  - 2) Wickedness does not bother the fool’s conscience; instead, he thinks that doing wrong is nothing but a joke.
    - a) In fact, wickedness is like an addiction that he just can’t give up.
      - i **Proverbs 13:19** – *“A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, but it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.”*
      - ii Paul described the same kind of situation as he spoke of those who *“did not receive the love of the truth”*. **2 Thess. 2:10b**.
      - iii To those who refuse the truth over and over:  
**2 Thessalonians 2:11** – *“And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.”*
      - iv Just like alcohol is addictive, the sinful life is also addictive to many who are so entrenched in it.
      - v This does not mean that they can never *“come to their senses”* and change their ways, but few of them do.
    - b) God cannot be blamed for the state of fools, and neither does He want them to continue in their folly.
      - i Just as with instruction, God offers men many avenues through which they can receive reproof and rebuke to correct their sinful ways.
      - ii Wise men see the value of this correction and change those things that are amiss in their lives.
      - iii But because the fools reject God’s ways and choose their own ways, they will not see any value in reproof and rebuke. We saw that in our lesson on “Reproof and Correction”.
      - iv Whether the correction comes through the words of Scripture, or through caring individuals, so long as the fool continues to be a fool, he will resist making any changes in his life.
    - c) Solomon spoke of the difficulty of getting the fool to change his ways.

- i **Proverbs 17:10** – *“Rebuke is more effective for a wise man than a hundred blows on a fool.”*
- ii **Proverbs 27:22** -- *“Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his foolishness will not depart from him.”*
- iii Hardship, punishment, and reproof all should convince a person to change when necessary, but none of these will cause the fool to alter his lifestyle.
- iv God wants His people to understand just how bad it is to be a fool who refuses to leave his folly.
  - Solomon indicates that a fool may turn away from his foolishness for a time, but he will eventually turn back to it.
  - **Proverbs 26:11** – *“As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.”*

## 5. **A Fool Is Known By His Lips**

- a. One characteristic of fools that proves to be especially detrimental to them is that their lips betray them.
  - 1) **Proverbs 13:16** – *“Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool lays open his folly.”*
  - 2) The fool opens his mouth and reveals his foolishness because he truly believes he has important things to say.
  - 3) The fool is not interested in listening to others since he considers his opinions so much better than any instruction other may have to offer.
    - a) **Proverbs 18:2** – *“A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.”*
    - b) **Proverbs 12:23** – *“A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.”*
    - c) **Proverbs 15:2** – *“The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.”*
  - 2) There is a humorous statement used today that says: *“It is better to keep silent and be thought a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt.”*
    - a) This saying was not conceived in modern times. Solomon also said it, just a little differently:
    - b) **Proverbs 17:28** – *“Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive.”*
  - 3) Pride and foolishness often go together, and pride moves the fool to open his mouth when he should remain quiet.
    - a) **Proverbs 14:3** – *“In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.”*
    - b) **Proverbs 18:6-7** – *“<sup>6</sup>A fool’s lips enter into contention, and his mouth calls for blows. <sup>7</sup>A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.”*

- i Fools love to argue, so when he opens his mouth in pride, he often brings the “*rod of correction*” upon his back.
  - ii The wise person knows when to speak and when to remain quiet, so that his lips protect him from the punishment the fool receives.
- 4) Very often the fool speaks too quickly.
  - a) It may not always be the case that the one who speaks too soon lacks knowledge, but he who does not show discretion in speaking usually says inappropriate things.
  - b) **Proverbs 18:13** – “*He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.*”
  - c) **Proverbs 29:11** – “*A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.*”
  - d) James has the answer to this problem for us today: **James 1:19** – “*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man (person) be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*”
- 6. **A Fool Does Not Control His Wrath**
  - a. The fool’s character flaws are many, but his uncontrollable temper is one of the worst flaws.
  - b. It is not always wrong to become angry. Paul said, “*Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath,*” **Ephesians 4:26**
  - c. The wise man always strives to demonstrate self-control, but the fool allows his anger to go unchecked.
    - 1) Proverbs describes the difference between the wise man and the fool regarding self control and anger.
      - a) **Proverbs 20:3** – “*A fool’s wrath is known at once, but a prudent man covers shame.*”
      - b) **Proverbs 20:3** – “*It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.*”
      - c) **Proverbs 14:16-17** – “*The simple believes every word, but the prudent considers well his steps. A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident. <sup>17</sup> A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, and a man of wicked intentions is hated.*”
    - 2) The fool does not stop to consider the consequences of his actions.
      - a) **Proverbs 29:20** – “*Do you see a man hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.*”
      - b) There is a modern saying similar to this as well: “*Think before you speak.*” This practice would save so many conflicts and hurt feelings.

### III. **WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW ALL OF THIS ABOUT FOOLS.**

- A. The book of Proverbs goes to great lengths to describe the fool.

1. One reason for this is to teach the wise person to avoid those things that cause one to be a fool.
2. Another reason is to identify the fool is so the wise may interact with them appropriately.
3. As seen already, the actions of fools affect not only themselves, but also those around them.
  - a. Because of this, the wise person will be on guard when in the company of a fool,
  - b. The wise will also be careful to conduct himself in a way that will lessen the influence of the fool's actions on his own life.
4. One of the most fundamental principles in dealing with fools is to avoid them when possible:
  - a. **Proverbs 14:7** – *“Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.”*
    - 1) One may not detect that a person is a fool at first glance, but the fool will reveal himself soon enough.
    - 2) When the wise person learns that he is in the presence of a fool, he will do well to avoid that man.
  - b. **Proverbs 17:12** – *“Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, rather than a fool in his folly.”*
    - 1) This proverb tells us that we would have less trouble with an angry mama bear whose cub had been stolen than to deal with a fool. What a condemnation!
    - 2) When one chooses to interact with a fool, he risks being the object of the fool's wrath.
 

**Proverbs 27:3** – *“A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than both of them.”*
  - c. It takes discernment to know the type of fool you are dealing with?
    - 1) **Proverbs:4-5** – gives two proverbs that seem contradictory, but each one refers to a different type of fool.
    - 2) **Vs. 4** – *“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.”*
      - a) This verse refers to a fool who has rejected all instruction.
      - b) He has had opportunity to learn and rejected it.
      - c) He has no interest in hearing your opinion so any rebuttal you offer him is a waste of time.
      - d) In this case it is foolish to even answer him, so it is better to avoid the discussion.
    - 3) **Vs. 5** – *“Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.”*
      - a) This verse applies to a fool who may not have had much opportunity to learn the right way.
      - b) He has formed strong opinions based on his own feelings rather than on knowledge or facts.



- c) There is hope that engaging in discussion with this person may prevent him from becoming stuck in his foolish, incorrect belief.
- B. There will be consequences for the Fool.
1. The wise advice of the Lord plainly points out that the fool has some undesirable consequences to face.
    - a. The consequences of being a fool will be painful.
      - 1) **Proverbs 19:1** – *“Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool.”*
      - 2) **Proverbs 26:3** – *“A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the fool’s back.”*
      - 3) **Proverbs 19:29** – *“Judgments are prepared for scoffers, and beatings for the backs of fools.”*
    - b. Other consequences that will occur in this life are:
      - 1) The foolish person is often rejected and shunned by others who are weary of their behavior.
      - 2) He may lose opportunities for advancement in his career because he cannot be trusted to make wise decisions.
      - 3) Many times, foolish behavior leads to criminal activity since the fool lacks the ability to discern between good and evil, so he may face consequences from the police.
  2. More significant than all of these are the spiritual consequences of being a fool.
    - a. Remember, the fool has rejected God and the wisdom of God’s of word.
 

**John 12:48** – *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”*
    - b. This consequence is inescapable, as long as the fool remains in his folly.
  3. Sadly, the actions of the fool also have consequences for others as well.
    - a. Children are supposed to be a great blessing to their parents.
      - 1) **Proverbs 23:24**, *“The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him.”*
      - 2) **Psalms 127:3-4** – *“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. <sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. <sup>5</sup> Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them;”*
      - 3) Those words are true for parents of children who respect their parents’ instruction and the word of the Lord, but the foolish child brings sorrow and grief to his parents.
        - a) **Proverbs 17:21** – *“He who begets a scoffer does so to his sorrow, and the father of a fool has no joy.”*
        - b) **Proverbs 17:25** – *“A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her who bore him.”*

- c) The foolish child also brings sorrow and shame to his own life.  
**Proverbs 13:18** – *“Poverty and shame will come to him who disdains correction, but he who regards a rebuke will be honored.”*
- b. When a child rejects his parents’ values and follows his own course through life, he can become a great source of grief to his parents.
  - 1) The thrill of joy they experienced at the birth their child gradually shifts to concern, anxiety, disappointment, frustration, regret and grief.
  - 2) The foolish child often cuts himself off from his own family.
  - 3) Sometimes children can be so foolish and rebellious that they turn their back on their own families rather than change their ways.
    - a) **Proverbs 11:29** – *“He who troubles his own house will inherit the wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise of heart.”*
    - b) To bring trouble on one’s own family can end in his being disinherited from the estate of his parents – *“inherit the wind”*.
    - c) Rather than being wealthy and having servants, the fool becomes a servant himself!

#### IV. APPLICATION FOR TODAY

- A. The book of Proverbs reveals God’s instructions for life in a practical way.
  - 1. Wisdom is the practical application of knowledge.
  - 2. To reject wisdom is to choose folly.
  - 3. Every wise man ought to study the ways of the fool so that he might recognize those things that take one from wisdom to folly.
  - 4. Knowing these things will make one seek the ways of wisdom revealed by the Lord.
  - 5. Seeing the danger of foolishness, he will be on guard when in the company of fools, and not allow the fool to influence him to turn from wisdom, because he understands that severe consequences await the fool.
- B. Though the fool deservedly brings serious consequences upon himself, there is a glimmer of hope for him.
  - 1. God blesses all men with the things that sustain life and as long as there is life, there is hope.
  - 2. Even the fool can change.
  - 3. Patiently, lovingly, God grants time and opportunity for the fool to change because He does not desire that anyone should be lost .
    - a. **2 Peter 3:9** – *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*
    - b. He has provided the way of wisdom through His Word. Paul said to Timothy: *“and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through*

*faith which is in Christ Jesus.”* **2 Timothy 3:15**

- c. The fool is not doomed to remain a fool if he comes to his senses and repents of his foolish ways.
- C. Jesus told a parable about a foolish man in **Luke 15:11-32**.
1. This parable is about a man who had two sons.
  2. The younger son said to his father, “*Father give me the portion of goods that falls to me.*”
    - a. Isn’t this a bit presumptuous of a child (especially an adult child) to demand what would be his when his father died?
    - b. Can you imagine one of your children coming to you tomorrow and asking for his portion of your property and money that would be allotted to him when you die?
    - c. I don’t know that I would have been as accommodating as this boy’s father was.
  3. The father divided to both his sons all that he owned. **Vs. 12** says “*So he divided to them his livelihood.*”
    - a. The Jewish custom was that the first born son would receive a double portion of the inheritance.
    - b. In this case, with two sons, the property would be divided into three parts. Two-thirds for the first born son and one-third for the younger son.
    - c. Normally, this “inheritance” would not be given until the death of the father.
    - d. This father was still alive, and although he still functioned as the patriarch of the family, he actually owned nothing since all he had was divided between his two sons.
  4. The foolish younger son wanted no more of working on the family farm, so he took his wealth and went to a far country.
    - a. Did he use the money to start a business? No.
    - b. Did he invest the money in something that would bring him a profit? No.
    - c. Did he deposit it in a bank and gain some interest? No.
    - d. He wasted it all in “prodigal living”. The word prodigal actually means “wasteful or extravagant”.
  5. As long as this foolish boy had money, he also had friends who took advantage of his extravagance.
    - a. Unfortunately, the money ran out. This foolish boy had made no provision for the future and only gratified his every desire day after day.
    - b. When the money was gone, so were his friends.
    - c. At the same time a severe famine occurred in that land and he became very hungry.
    - d. He was desperate, so as a last resort, he got a job working for a “farmer” (exactly the same work he had originally run away from only worse).
    - e. The farmer was obviously a Gentile, since he owned pigs, and he sent the boy out to the fields to feed the pigs. How humiliating for a Jew.

- f. The boy was so hungry that he would have gladly eaten the pods that the swine ate, but no one gave him anything to eat.
  - g. For a Jewish boy to have anything to do with pigs was about as low as a person could get,
  - h. There is a saying that goes, "*When you hit the bottom, there is nowhere to go but up.*" That is where this foolish boy found himself.
6. **Luke 15:17** is the verse that lets us know that a fool does not have to remain a fool all of his life. It says, "*But when he came to himself...*"
- a. It is as if he had been insane and suddenly his mind came back to him; then he realized a profound truth – that even the servants of his father had plenty of food to eat and he was starving to death.
  - b. Perhaps for the first time in his life, he made a plan to get out of this miserable situation.
    - 1) He decided he would go home to his father and admit his sin.
    - 2) So he arose and began the journey back to his father. Remember, he went to a "far country", so it must have taken quite a while to get back home.
    - 3) While he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion. He ran and hugged and kissed his son.
    - 4) Evidence that this foolish boy had matured during his experience was shown when he humbly said to his father, "*Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.*"
7. The response of this father was remarkable.
- a. He was not angry, nor did he ask why his foolish son had come back.
  - b. He did not say "*I knew you would be back when you failed.*"
  - c. Instead, he sent his servants to bring out the best robe to put on him and a ring for his finger (a symbol that he was a beloved son), and some sandals on his feet.
  - d. This young man must have looked terrible: very thin from hunger, worn and dirty clothing from the long journey and maybe bare footed.
  - e. Then the father ordered a fatted calf to be killed so that they could have a feast to celebrate the miracle that his son was alive.
  - f. Verse 24 reveals how much the father was hurt when his son demanded his inheritance and just walked away from his family.
    - 1) The father said: "*for this my son was **dead** and is alive again; he was **lost** and is found.*"
    - 2) Many parents feel the heart-breaking experience of having their children run away from home, sometimes never to be seen again.
    - 3) I personally know a woman who had four children: two daughters and two sons.
      - a) One of her sons severed his relationship with his mother by moving away and never contacting her again.
      - b) To this day, she does not know if he is alive or dead, much less where he is.

- 4) The father had definitely suffered greatly at the loss of his son, and yet he didn't make the homecoming of his son about how much HE had suffered because of a foolish son.
8. The response of the older brother was disappointing. He may have missed his brother, but he harbored great resentment toward him when he returned.
9. When the older son came in from the field and heard music and dancing he asked the servants what was going on.
- The servant said, *"Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf"*
  - The older brother was so angry he would not even go in to the celebration. He was pouting.
  - At last, the father came out to him and begged him to join the celebration.
  - The older son said, *"Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him."*
  - Now honestly, don't you think you might have felt the same way. *"I have been the good son and I never got a party, but your foolish, wasteful, sinful son returns and everyone celebrates."*
  - What a wise man their father truly was. He answered his son, *"Son, you are always with me. (I never had to fear that you were dead), and all that I have is yours. (Remember, you now own all that I had and you and your family will be well taken care of.) It is right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive, was lost and is found."*
  - Let's look at the father's last statement a little more closely:
    - "...your brother was dead and is alive" – The father spoke as though his son had died and he had grieved the loss of his son.
    - "...was lost and is found" – being lost isn't as bad as being dead, so why did the father add this statement?
      - The father understood that his younger son was being foolish when he wanted his inheritance so he could leave home.
      - It is natural to think that a son so foolish would place himself in danger (after all he was carrying a lot of money), so it was not irrational to believe that after a long time with no word from him that he was dead.
      - This father also knew that the very attitude that caused his son to want to take the money and run was because he was attracted to worldly things.
      - Not only was his life in danger, but his soul was also in danger. This son had turned his back on his Jewish upbringing to travel to a foreign land (the land of Gentiles).

- e) His father also grieved that his son had turned his back on God as well as his family.
- h. This father wanted his older son to celebrate that his brother had come to his senses and that his life and his soul would now be safe.
- i. This parable more than any other passage teaches that even a fool can “come to his senses” and return to God and go on to live a productive life.

## V. CONCLUSION

- A. There is a lesson in this for us today.
  - 1. In the same chapter (**Luke 15**) Jesus told of a shepherd who had a hundred sheep and one was lost.
  - 2. Sheep are known to be stubborn and rather dumb. They easily wander away from the safety of the flock.
  - 3. Even so, the shepherd left the ninety-nine in the wilderness to go after the one that was lost until he found it.
  - 4. He put the sheep on his shoulders and went back and called his neighbors together asking them to rejoice with him because he had found one lost sheep.
- B. Jesus compared this lost sheep to a person lost in sin.
  - 1. Whether the lost one has never heard the gospel or he is a Christian who has wandered back into the world, away from the safety of the fold of God, does not matter
  - 2. Jesus said in **Luke 15:7** – *“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”*
  - 3. We must never be like the older brother who resented the fact that his father rejoiced over the return of his son.
  - 4. Selfishness got in the way of letting the older son celebrate with his father.
  - 5. Instead, he whined that he had stayed and worked hard on the land and he had received no reward for it. Well, except for the fact that he OWNED EVERYTHING that his father had worked for and built over a lifetime.
  - 6. We must be able to celebrate when foolish sinners repent and obey the gospel, or when wayward Christians humbly repent and return to the fold.
  - 7. Never, never, never give up on praying for those who are foolish enough to turn their back on God. Perhaps they will repent, if they live long enough.