

**Dead Flies, Deadly Snakes,
Dangerous Birds**
(Ecclesiastes 10)

Some defend “little sins”

- Subjective (fornication; drunkenness)
- All “little sins” are dangerous
 - Procrastination
 - Indecision
 - Undue levity
 - Despondency
 - Anxiety
 - Lack of self control . . .

Ecclesiastes 10
resembles
Proverbs

I. Foolishness Destroys, 10:1-3

1: cf. 7:1

- Wisdom / honor / perfume please us
 - They can be nullified by a little folly
 - Dead flies make perfume stink
- One dead fly ruins entire bottle of ointment
 - One reckless moment can ruin reputation forever
 - Easier to destroy than to build up

...lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright – Hb.12:16

1: folly stinks

- Folly: associated with evil; more a moral issue than mental. 8:11
 - Aaron, Ex.32
 - Moses, Nu.20
 - 1 Co.5:6
- Little folly outweighs wisdom
 - One fly . . . one unguarded moment . . .
 - 9:18, one sinner... Josh.7; Ac.5; 2 K.20
 - Ezk.18:24

Health

Money

Marriage

Anger

2: folly is heart defect (lacks sense)

- Right hand: honor, strength.
- Left: often of inferiority. Gn.48:13-20

I have set the Lord always before me;
Because He is at my right hand I shall
not be moved – Ps.16:8

⁵ The Lord is your keeper; The Lord is
your shade at your right hand. ⁶ The
sun shall not strike you by day, Nor the
moon by night – Ps.121

2: the heart

- Wise man's heart guides him toward the right . . . (NASB...).
- Fool's heart is at his left. Mt.25:...33, 41
- Wise man's mind is his guardian. Ro.12:2

Fill mind with filth: stay in sin

Renew mind: obsess with God's will

- Mt.26:39, "...not as I will, but as You will"

3: “Your folly is showing!”

- Seen in daily conduct / speech.
- “Never leaves home without it” (folly).

Morally ignorant,
2:14

Rowdy songs,
7:5

Lazy,
4:5

Shallow laughter,
7:6

Long-winded,
5:3

Easily angered,
7:9

Displeasing,
5:4

Stubborn,
9:17; Pr.17:10

3: “Your folly is showing!”

- “Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt”
– A. Lincoln
- Even a fool can escape detection when silent . . .

²⁷ He who has knowledge spares his words,
And a man of understanding is of a calm
spirit. ²⁸ Even a fool is counted wise when
he holds his peace; When he shuts his lips,
he is considered perceptive – Pr.17

I. Foolishness Destroys, 10:1-3

II. Foolishness Rules, 10:4-7

4: conciliation / calmness: calm response

- Pr.16:14 – As messengers of death is the king's wrath, But a wise man will appease it
 - “Least said is soonest mended”
 - Jg.8:1-3
 - Foolish pride storms out...
 - Difficult people are everywhere
 - They often force us to grow as no one else can

5-6: may have to yield to a ruler

- ...though he is not always right
- Est.3, Mordecai . . . Haman

7: servants on horses (rule; wealth)

- Dt.17:16 . . . Est.5, Haman . . . Mordecai

“Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne – Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown, Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own” – James Russell Lowell

I. Foolishness Destroys, 10:1-3

II. Foolishness Rules, 10:4-7

III. Foolishness Works, 10:8-11

8: Danger!! Benefits of wisdom

- Dig a pit

¹⁵ He made a pit and dug it out And has fallen into the ditch which he made. ¹⁶ His trouble shall return upon his own head, And his violent dealing shall come down on his own crown – Psalm 7

²⁷ Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him – Prov.26

8-9: Danger!! Benefits of wisdom

- Dig pit ...
 - “Hoist with own petard”
 - Haman, Est.7
- Break down wall... Pr.24:30-34
- Quarry stones, 9. 1 K.5:17
- Split logs, 9. Dt.19:5
 - 10: dull ax... (wisdom helps)
 - 11: use wisdom in timely manner
 - Snake bites...

I. Foolishness Destroys, 10:1-3

II. Foolishness Rules, 10:4-7

III. Foolishness Works, 10:8-11

IV. Foolishness Talks, 10:12-15

12: all wisdom literature discusses the tongue

- Word of wise: gracious (Lk.4:22)
- Fool can't stay quiet
- Fool's words do not defeat opponents, but himself

He who guards his mouth preserves his life, But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction – Prov.13:3

13: begins with foolishness (silly)...

- ...ends with evil madness.
- Foolish words come from foolish heart.
- He has no idea what he is talking about ...

14: fools talk without knowledge; don't
know the present ... much less future
(3:22; 8:7)

–Lk.12:16-20. Ja.4:13. Mt.12:34-37.

15: labor of fools: talks till he is blue...

A highway will be there, a roadway, And it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, But it will be for him who walks that way, And fools will not wander on it – Isa.35:8

“None but a fool is lost on a straight road”

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II. Foolishness Rules, 10:4-7

III. Foolishness Works, 10:8-11

IV. Foolishness Talks, 10:12-15

V. Foolishness Leads, 10:16-20

16: folly in high places

- Woe if child is king.
- Is.3:1-5. 1 K.3:7
 - Princes feast in morning (cf. 17).
 - Incompetent leaders ruin everything they touch. 1 K.12, Rehoboam (*child*)
 - Rulers live in luxury while citizens die of famine.

17: blessed land if king is son of nobles

- Feast at proper time (ct. 16) – for strength, not to get drunk.
- An indulgent king is a national hazard.

18: “time alters all things for the worse”

- Lazy leaders bring consequences:
- Figure of decaying building...is kingdom of lazy monarch.
- Ftnt.: rafters sink; house of state sinks...

19: bad leaders pursue parties
and money: satisfy every wish

- He fixes all problems by raising taxes.
- 1 K.12, it takes money to support their lavish lifestyle.

20: do not react in wrong way (criticize leaders)

- “The walls have ears.”
- “A little bird told me.”