

There are many examples of this such as Proverbs 11:1,

"A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.", Proverbs 14:31,

"He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor."

and many others. These are clear, conscience warnings that the Lord gives to all people.

Finally, there are Proverbs that pertain to both moral and general at the same time. Proverbs 3:1-2 is a perfect example of this,

"My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee."

The command to honor our parents is a moral absolute; however, the promise about long life is only a generalization, not an absolute. Looking for a perfect example? Jesus Christ was the perfect example of one who sinlessly honored His Father. You couldn't find a more perfect example of honor to His earthly parents as well, yet He was crucified in His early thirties, therefore, not living a long life. It can be argued that because He is God and lives eternally, that is long life. However, the Bible was not written

FOR Him, but BY Him FOR us! We also know Godless, worldly people that live lives that are totally contrary to what God expects of us, and yet they can live into their 100's. That is why this verse is a perfect example.

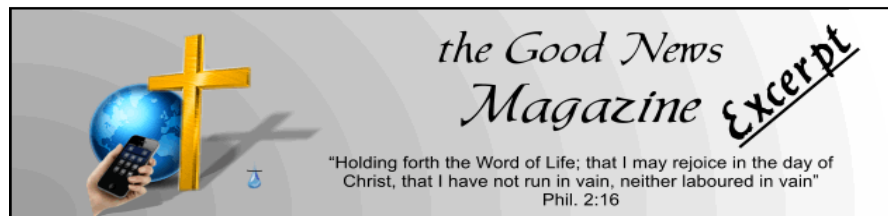
So, do we answer a fool? If we come across someone who is by definition a Biblical fool, if they are willing to listen, heed God's word, and turn to understanding and apply to their daily lives, then yes.

If you come across someone who is by definition a Biblical fool, and all they want to do is debate around and around in circles, you are wasting your breath, and they are not ready to hear or heed the word of God, no. It is pointless to continue on as your words are as pearls cast before swine, (Matthew 7:6 ~

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

That being said, may the Lord give us His wisdom, discernment, and guidance as we attempt to not only apply the wisdom of Proverbs, but discern as to whether or not to fool with a fool. [-] [-]

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Don't You Fool With A Fool

by M. Deborah Senese #63391

According to the Bible, what exactly is a fool? If you look at it from the point of being a verb (an action) the definition is, " To trifle; to toy; to spend time in idleness, sport or mirth."

According to the KJV Dictionary. Looking at it from the view point of a noun (a person) it's a totally different story and the definitions are quite lengthy;

1. One who is destitute of reason.
2. In common language, a person who is somewhat deficient in intellect, but not an idiot; or a person who acts absurdly; one who does not exercise his reason; one who pursues a course contrary to the dictates of wisdom.
3. In scripture, fool is often used for a wicked or

depraved person; one who acts contrary to sound wisdom in his moral deportment; one who follows his own inclinations, who prefers trifling and temporary pleasures to the service of God and eternal happiness.

So what do we do when we come across what the Bible refers to as a fool? That can be a difficult question. We as humans sometimes allow our emotions to overrule what the Lord tells us in His word we should do. In order to know exactly what to do, we know exactly where to turn; The Bible!

Let's start at Proverbs 26:4;

"Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him."

That is pretty plain and straight forward. Now, let's take a look at the very next verse,

"Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit."

Okay, now I'm really confused! Both are commands given by the Lord. Both are found in the same chapter. Both are found

in the book of Proverbs. Ah! Maybe we need to take a look at how we interpret the book of Proverbs before going any further.

Upon doing much research, the best I can understand, I will try to explain to you. The book of Proverbs contains two types of categories; Prescriptive and Descriptive. Descriptive Proverbs simply tell us about a way of life that we can learn by example. That part is easy to comprehend and really doesn't require the focus that the Prescriptive Proverb does concerning a fool. The easiest way for me to understand this was in a book written by Klein Blomberg Hubbard where he says, "A prescriptive proverb does more than simply tell about the way life is. It seeks to characterize an attitude or an action in order to influence behavior." That makes sense.

A prescriptive proverb that allows for exceptions is a generalization. The example we saw in Proverbs 26:4-5 is certainly an example of this. There are contexts when we should avoid answering a fool lest we look like the fool. Then there are other times when we should answer the fool so that he does not look wise in his own

eyes. We must use godly discernment in determining which proverb to follow and use wise planning with Godly advice as praised in Proverbs 15:22;

"Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established."

Confused yet? This is a difficult topic to understand let alone try to explain to others. However, it is one that needs to be addressed as there are times or will be times when we will encounter a Biblical "fool" and we need to know how to go about dealing with this situation. This has confounded me for many years. So in my quest to understand, I will share with you as I understand it. As I've said many times before, please don't take my word for it, but go to the word; God's Word!

To really comprehend this, we need to understand that some proverbs are generalizations because they are bound to the dispensation of law. The Old Testament lived under the law, so that is easy to be understood. Psalms that

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pertain to this type are ones such as Psalm 10:22.

"The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

In other words, the blessing of the Lord makes you rich without having to work or toil for it. But we know this is not true. Is the Bible lying? No. It is simply that this verse pertained to a certain people as proven in Deut.28:8-14,

"The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee."

Not one place does the Lord say anything about having to work for all that they are going to be blessed with. Does this apply to us? No. But it is an

example to us of what the Lord is capable of, therefore, the Lord found it important for us to know. The blessings of wealth were promised to obedient Israelites. This type of promise has limits since it is not made to believers in the New Testament. That's why it is SO important to not take one verse out of context, and apply it to every person of every dispensation. A very good example of this is 2 Chronicles 7:14 where the Lord was speaking to HIS people, the Israelites, telling them,

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

This verse was speaking to a specific people, at a specific time, for a specific reason. That is not to say that the Lord "couldn't" do this for us today, however, we need to realize it was not spoken to Believers, but again, to His chosen people, the Israelites.

Now, to move on. A prescriptive proverb that has no exceptions is a moral absolute. This will often be true in proverbs dealing with an action or characteristic of God Himself. This is easier to explain.