

## Message #108

## Proverbs 26:1-6

**WISE PEOPLE KNOW THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOLS AND THEY KNOW HOW TO WISELY DEAL WITH THEM AND HOW TO AVOID THEIR CHARACTERISTICS.**

The noun “fool,” which is obviously the key theme of the first 12 verses (26:1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12), is a word that refers to one who holds himself up as an impious giant (Gesenius, p. 408). He is proud, religious and impressive and is caught up with himself; but God views him as a dull, obstinate, proud fool.

**WISDOM PRINCIPLE #1** – Wise people know honor is not fitting for a fool. **26:1**

To promote and to praise a fool is a total waste of time and is totally out of place and is unproductive and damaging like snow in summer and rain in harvest time.

**WISDOM PRINCIPLE #2** – Wise people know foolish curses are senseless. **26:2**

The word “curse” is a word that specifically refers to petitioning God for something evil or bad to happen (II Kings 2:23-25). The wisdom principle is the only way a curse will work is if the curse is deserved. As Ryrie said, “An unjustified curse will never be effective.” There are times in the N.T. when a curse-type of prayer is appropriate (Matt. 18:18-20; I Cor. 5:4-5; James 5:13-16; I John 5:14-16), but only if it is valid will it be answered.

**WISDOM PRINCIPLE #3** – Wise people know fools need discipline to give direction. **26:3**

A fool will not respond to verbal appeals so you must use some physical means of giving direction. In O.T. times, the “rod” was used as an instrument of chastening. Any society or organization that wants to function in a wise way must have some disciplinary system for fools.

**WISDOM PRINCIPLE #4** – Wise people do not behave like a fool. **26:4**

The challenge of this proverb is do not answer, reply or speak in a way that resembles the proud arrogance of a fool and do not get into a verbal argument with a proud, idiotic fool.

**WISDOM PRINCIPLE #5** – Wise people will not yield to a fool. **26:5**

Dr. Merrill Unger says this verse challenges a wise person to size up the fool and “answer him in such a manner that his folly will be exposed.” Make a fool look like what he is—a fool.

**WISDOM PRINCIPLE #6** – Wise people never give important responsibilities to a fool. **26:6**

Give important assignments to those wise, not to fools because fools will always wreck things.