

# Wise Women, Oxen, & Fools

*Proverbs 14:1-32*

*Puritan Reformed Church - Pastor David Reece*

*Lord's Day August 7th, Anno Domini 2022*

## OUTLINE OF PROVERBS 14:1-32

### 1) Child / Youth - Collection I<sup>1</sup>

1:1-7 - Introduction

**Purpose:** 1:2-3 - 2 To hear wisdom [Hokmah] and instruction [musar], To see the words of understanding, 3 To grab the instruction [musar] of success [haskel], Justice [truth], judgment [choice], and equity [order/beauty];

**Thesis:** 1:7 - 7 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

A - 1:8-19 - The Father's Invitation vs. The Gang's Invitation

B - 1:20-33 - Wisdom Rebukes the simple

C - 2:1-22 - The Father Warns against evil men and the unchaste woman

D - 3:1-4:27 - The Father Commands that teaching be heeded

D' - 5:1-6:35 - The Father warns against the unchaste woman

C' - 7:1-27 - The Father Warns against the Woman Folly

B' - 8:1-36 - Wisdom's invitation to the simple

A' - 9:1-18 - Wisdom's Invitation vs. Folly's Invitation to the simple

### 2) Young Man / Adult - Collection II - 10:1-22:16 - The 375 Proverbs of Solomon

### 3) Young Man / Adult - Collection III - 22:17-24:22 - The Thirty Sayings of the Wise

### 4) Young Man / Adult - Collection IV - 24:23-34 - Further Sayings of the Wise

### 5) Father / Leader - Collection V - 25:1-29:27 - More Proverbs of Solomon from Hezekiah's Men

### 6) Father / Leader - Collection VI - 30:1-33 - The Sayings of Agur Son of Jakeh

### 7) Father / Leader - Collection VII - 31:1-31:31 - The Sayings of Lemuel

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<sup>1</sup> Collection I outline Modified from Bruce Waltke NICOT: Proverbs - page 12

## TEXT - PROVERBS 14:1-32

### V. 1-7 - Chiasm 1 - Walk by Faith

The wise woman builds her house,  
But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.  
2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord,  
But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.  
3 In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride,  
But the lips of the wise will preserve them.  
4 Where no oxen are, the trough is clean;  
But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.  
5 A faithful witness does not lie,  
But a false witness will utter lies.  
6 A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it,  
But knowledge is easy to him who understands.  
7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,  
When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.

Walking in Wisdom (by faith)

- A - 1-2 - Embrace a Wise Wife as Companion and the fear of God
- B - 3 - Foolish speech and wise speech
- C - 4 - Wealth generated by initiative and industry in using available resources
- B' - 5 - Character controls speech
- A' - 6-7 - Avoid Mockers and Fools

A & A'

- 1) **14:1 The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands. 2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord, But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.**
- 2) **6 A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it, But knowledge is easy to him who understands. 7 Go from the presence of a foolish man, When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.**
  - a) The wise woman - builds her house, fears the Lord, finds knowledge easily
  - b) The foolish woman - pulls down her house with he own hands, despises the Lord, seeks wisdom unsuccessfully, ought to be avoided based upon her profession of falsehood

B & B'

- 3) **3 In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride, But the lips of the wise will preserve them.**
- 4) **5 A faithful witness does not lie, But a false witness will utter lies.**
  - a) The mouth of the fool - is a rod of pride, will utter lies
  - b) The lips of the wise - preserve the wise, do not lie

C

- 5) **4 Where no oxen are, the trough [manger or feed trough] is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.**
  - a) It is easier to avoid buying and managing capital goods
  - b) But capital goods generate a lot of wealth

**14:1 The wise woman builds her house,  
But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.**

- 1) 13:20 - He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.
  - a) If the wife is the companion of one's life, then how much more important is having a wise wife than any other relationship
- 2) The wise woman builds her household
  - a) Words and Work - prophetic, priestly, kingly words and work
  - b) A Wife - Honor to Husband - hearing his words, working to support him and achieve his goals and manage what he hands to you and puts under you, speaking to give him counsel, speaking to encourage and honor him both in public and private
  - c) A Mother - Children - care for the mind of the child (teaching, rebuking, correcting, musar / paideia / instruction / training in righteousness), care for the body, care for the skill of the child to exercise dominion competently, care for the child's relationships to see that the child honors and cares for others rightly, care for the child's property and ability to manage property.
  - d) A Mistress - Servants - profitable employment, teaching, rebuking, correction, instruction, household rules
  - e) Materially - working with the husband to build the estate and apply the law to it - there is more to do than there is time for.
  - f) Beautifier - making the home beautiful and pleasant to be in
  - g) Hostess - 2 Chronicles 9, 1 Kings 10

- i) Questions / Wisdom
  - ii) House - the building and furnishing in good order ruled by the word of God - Godly art (2nd commandment, 7th commandment)
  - iii) Food - appearance, smell, taste, quantity, health
  - iv) Seating - arranging things to be beautiful, encouraging useful interaction, and good service
  - v) Service of the waiters and their apparel - Honoring and pleasant service - Respectable attire - Good food and good welcoming supplied quickly on good service.
  - vi) Cupbearers and their apparel (2 Chron 9 mentions the Cupbearers' apparel) - Honoring and pleasant service - Respectable attire - Enjoyable drinks supplied quickly in good cups
  - vii) Entryway to the house of the LORD - Family worship
- 3) The foolish woman pulls down her household with her own hands
- a) Husband - stop him from growing, encourage escape
  - b) Children - rather than orderly discipline, provoking to wrath by failure to discipline or failure to provide process and teaching - expectation without investment
  - c) Servants - attracting bad servants and repulsing good servants, preventing good servants from thriving, encouraging servants to sin, neglecting to assist your husband in the running of the estate.
  - d) Materially - over consumption, hoarding, failure to help your husband invest
  - e) Ugliness - making the home unpleasant and ugly.
  - f) Hostess - failure to help the husband lead and gain influence by hospitality, neglect of hospitality or evil hospitality that is entirely political and excludes the righteous poor and is not for glorifying God - wasting resources on entertainment and on fools and ungodly companions

**2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the Lord,  
But he who is perverse in his ways despises Him.**

- 4) It is foolish to say that you love and fear God and then ignore and break His law. Being perverse in your ways is a despising/hating of God.
- 5) Think of this in the context of considering a woman for marriage.

**3 In the mouth of a fool is a rod of pride,  
But the lips of the wise will preserve them.**

- 6) The mouth of the fool holds the tongue which says so many foolish things that have the effect of bringing pain to the foolish speaker. The Fools mouth beats the fool - causing pain. The man who is gaining wisdom will use the pain caused by the words of his own mouth to learn to speak better.
- 7) The lips of the wise have a preserving/healing effect rather than a harming effect.

**4 Where no oxen are, the trough [manger or feed trough] is clean;  
But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.**

- 8) Work is messing. Work is hard. The cruse makes it less fruitful and less reliable than it would otherwise be. Capital Goods take work to deploy. If you do not buy Capital goods, then you will have less work to manage your capital goods.
- 9) However, much profit comes by deploying the capital goods. Working - Initiative to deploy. Keeping - Industry to continue the use.
- 10) We have an imaginary view of the world that everything is so complex and so hard and such a well-tuned machine. This is a lie that prevents us from being productive.

**5 A faithful witness does not lie,  
But a false witness will utter lies.**

- 11) Matthew 7:13-29

**6 A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not find it,  
But knowledge is easy to him who understands.**

- 12) The Scoffer rejects the revealed wisdom out of pride and because he will not consider how it alone possesses answers that are meaningful and coherent as a system.
- 13) Knowledge is easy to the one whom God has already humbled and given insight to.

**7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,  
When you do not perceive in him the lips of knowledge.**

- 14) Separate from fools who will not be corrected, will not hear rebuke, will not learn, will not speak what is right.

## V. 8-15 - Chiasm 2 - Walk Not by Sight

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way,  
But the folly of fools is deceit.  
9 Fools mock at sin [Lit. guilt],  
But among the upright there is favor.  
10 The heart knows its own bitterness,  
And a stranger does not share its joy.  
11 The house of the wicked will be overthrown,  
But the tent of the upright will flourish.  
12 There is a way that seems right to a man,  
But its end is the way of death.  
13 Even in laughter the heart may sorrow,  
And the end of mirth may be grief.  
14 The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways,  
But a good man will be satisfied from above [Lit. from above himself].  
15 The simple believes every word,  
But the prudent considers well his steps. (bridge - repeated below)

Walking not by sight

A - 8 - The shrewd and fools

B - 9 - Making amends for sin

C - 10 - secrets of the heart

D - 11 - the destruction of the wicked vs. the prosperity  
of the upright

D' - 12 - the deceptive way to death

C' - 13 - secrets of the heart

B' - 14 - being repaid for sin

A' - 15 - the gullible vs the shrewd

A & A'

- 6) **8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way, But the folly of fools is deceit. ... 15 The simple believes every word, But the prudent considers well his steps.**
- a) The wisdom of the prudent - understands his way, considers well his steps
  - b) The Folly of Fools - deceit, believes every word

B & B'

7) **9 Fools mock at sin [Lit. guilt], But among the upright there is favor. ... 14 The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, But a good man will be satisfied from above [Lit. from above himself].**

- a) Fools - give scorn to create strife, are filled with their own unsatisfying ways
- b) The upright - get and give favor in creating peace, are satisfied from above themselves

C & C'

8) **10 The heart knows its own bitterness, And a stranger does not share its joy. ... 13 Even in laughter the heart may sorrow, And the end of mirth may be grief.**

- a) The heart - feels its own suffering/bitterness, feels its own joy/sweetness, can sorrow while laughing, and can lose temporary mirth/pleasure to be replaced with grief/suffering
- b) Others do not - feel your suffering, feel your joy, feel the sorrow behind your laugh, or taste the grief after your mirth

D & D'

9) **11 The house of the wicked will be overthrown, But the tent of the upright will flourish. 12 There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.**

- a) The house of the wicked - overthrown, acts according to its own imaginings toward death
- b) The tent of the upright - flourish ... acts according to the revealed doctrine toward life

## **V. 15-18 - Contrasting wisdom with actions**

**15 The simple believes every word,**

**But the prudent considers well his steps. (Bridge already read)**

**16 A wise man fears and departs from evil,**

**But a fool rages and is self-confident.**

**17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly,**

**And a man of wicked intentions is hated.**

**18 The simple inherit folly,**

**But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.**

### V. 18-24 - Contrasting Consequences with Actions

19 The evil will bow before the good,  
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.  
20 The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor,  
But the rich has many friends [Lit. many are the lovers of the rich].  
21 He who despises his neighbor sins;  
But he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he.  
22 Do they not go astray who devise evil?  
But mercy and truth belong to those who devise good.  
23 In all labor there is profit,  
But idle chatter [Lit. talk of the lips] leads only to poverty.  
24 The crown of the wise is their riches,  
But the foolishness of fools is folly.

### V. 25-32 - Contrasting Doctrine and consequences of life or death

25 A true witness delivers souls [saves lives],  
But a deceitful witness speaks lies.  
26 In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence,  
And His children will have a place of refuge.  
27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,  
To turn one away from the snares of death.  
28 In a multitude of people is a king's honor,  
But in the lack of people is the downfall of a prince.  
29 He who is slow to wrath has great understanding,  
But he who is impulsive [Lit. short of spirit] exalts folly.  
30 A sound heart is life to the body,  
But envy is rottenness to the bones.  
31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker,  
But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.  
32 The wicked is banished in his wickedness,  
But the righteous has a refuge in his death.