

## More than Surviving in a Crazy World

... By Winning the Debate Proverbs 1

May 23, 2019 Bob Szoke

**Illustration:** As I look around the community, and even look within the Impact family, I can see that we are tired, that we are worn down, that many of us feel like we've been fighting a battle uphill for several years. Fighting the battle, we may have gained some ground, only to have it all shoved back again and finding out that we've lost what little ground we gained. We live in a crazy world. Someone has defined **"craziness"** as doing the same thing over and over yet thinking this time there will be different results.



Surviving as believers in Jesus is becoming more and more an issue. We know that our personal value system, which is biblically based, is being challenged. Normal things that we stood for easily when we were children are now considered abnormal. For example: marriage is but a matter of convenience for many, even people who believe in Jesus have difficulty with the pre-marital sex issue. What was once understood has been rationalized away. One's personal belief system now appears to have entered the arena of personal truth, which may be different from revealed truth in God's Word. And, one more issue that appears to be an issue that creates craziness is the concept of family. A word I've used before is the term **"deconstructionism"** which takes the biblical truth and tears it apart so that what remains is what's considered the basic of the concept. For example: marriage, which biblically we see it as between a man and a woman, deconstructionism says the concept is that of love and loyalty, regardless of sex. This is the world we live in!

**How do we, as believers in Jesus, survive in this kind of world, where our friends, our family, our loved ones, our kids are being dragged into a life that makes our heart break, a lifestyle that isn't what honors God?** What do we do? Do we just act as if nothing is wrong? Do we just ignore and hope for the best?

Do we compromise and say that maybe the Bible was wrong, or it's been interpreted incorrectly, or there is a new 21<sup>st</sup> Century interpretation which needs to take precedent? What do we do?



These next weeks will be a look at the book of Proverbs. **Proverbs is more than a bunch of witty sayings, but truth that unfolds before our very eyes and can guide us in “more than surviving in the crazy world in which we live.”**

Today, we will begin this study and focus on the unending Great Debate in competition for lives... the battle between wisdom and foolishness. Today, I want to talk about **“winning that debate!”**

### **The Overall Plan to More than Survive**

**Illustration:** Is there really a plan to more than survive? Is that like asking “Does BigFoot exist?” From an article on the internet: *Bigfoot (does) exist(s), and we’ve got his DNA! That was the claim of a group of researchers led by a vet from Texas, Dr. Melba Ketchum, at a press conference on Oct. 1. She says analysis of DNA samples proves that Bigfoot is the product of interbreeding between humans and some other, unknown primate species. (Yes, that means someone would literally be able to say, “I had Bigfoot’s baby.”) ... The Olympia Brewing Company has a standing offer of \$1 million dollar for anyone who can capture Bigfoot. (You are not allowed to shoot, stab or even net the creature. You can, however, lure him into your car with cookies.)... <https://nypost.com/2013/10/20/bigfoot-doesnt-exist-but-sometimes-i-wish-he-did/>*

This all sounds pretty crazy... almost like me saying, “Yes, you can more than survive in a crazy world.” Some will criticize me, others will call me full of wishful thinking, and others may even equate me with those who yet search for Bigfoot or the Loch Ness monster, or the Yeti (better known as the Abominable Snowman). But, unlike those things, I’m not crazy.

1. **Yes, there is a plan,** and perhaps the best way to begin is to say that we are going to look at the plan in its full scope, its fullness. God does



have a plan on how to more than survive and that plan can be seen and lived out.

2. Here's the plan: **Proverbs 1:1-7** *The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel: 2 for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight; 3 for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; 4 for giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young-- 5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance-- 6 for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. 7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.*

3. **Illustration:** *The Plan works, look at the results.* Have you ever wondered why these weight loss commercials always show us someone who's taken their product, and the amazing weight they've lost?

**RESULTS**

Pick your commercial, and they all do the same, because they want you see the results as you hear about their amazing product. One may watch the

commercial with great skepticism, but after seeing the same commercial for the 58<sup>th</sup> time, you may begin thinking, "maybe there's something to this product?" One famous product says, "It's not necessary for one to change their lifestyle in order to lose weight." Another product says, "We will bring you what you should eat for the rest of your life." Another product is endorsed by doctors stating how blood pressure was relieved, diabetes reversed, and a whole host of other things. The point I am making is, **"look at the results and go backwards from there." That's why we know God's plan works.**

4. That's the way to read these opening verses of Proverbs. The result of wisdom and discipline, the result of understanding, the result of the disciplined and prudent life, the result of knowing and doing what is just and fair, the wisdom of listening and growing, the understanding of those who think themselves wise...all are results that come from pursuing the Wisdom of God.
5. An important note: **the place to begin is the same place to end.**

- a. **Illustration:** As I was in preparation for this message, I was speaking with another pastor about the life of Solomon. Of all the things for which Solomon is noted, guess what my pastor friend spoke about first? If you said it was his 1000 wives and the foolishness with which he ended his life, you'd be right. Would you want your children, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews to grow up and be like Solomon? You may say yes, but then you'd stop because what needed clarification was that you were hoping for the wisdom and knowledge part, not the obscene part.
- b. If Solomon had ended his life where he says it needs to start, with the fear of the Lord guiding him, we would know and probably respect him more. As it is, we read about his life, knowing how he started, but that he failed to take his own counsel on how to live in a crazy world and survive. He didn't, *but the point is, he could have.*
6. **The place where we begin.** The plan does exist on how to more than survive in a crazy world. The plan is not obsolete, doesn't need any revisions or redactions, doesn't need anyone's input, and stands on its own merit as a plan that is workable.
- a. **To more than survive means: Here's a list of results!**
- i. Attaining wisdom and developing self-discipline.
  - ii. Making right distinctions and decisions.
  - iii. Receiving the wisdom that's worth receiving and discarding what's unworthy.
  - iv. Developing the ability to live skillfully and then to build not only your life but the lives of those around you on these same truths.
  - v. Being a person of godly righteousness, justice and fairness as you deal with people.
  - vi. Being a teacher and a model of what it looks, sounds and acts like as a person who is more than surviving.





- vii. Living a discernable plan that distinguishes one as a person who thrives and can be that example for those wondering and examining.
  - viii. Being competent to critique, advise and counsel those who struggle with the things of life.
  - ix. And by example, demonstrating that the pursuit of godly wisdom is well worth all the effort, well worth all the sacrifice, and truly the plan on which other lives need to trod. To openly demonstrate, by decisions and actions, why godly wisdom is right.
7. Where do you want to end up in life? What is it that your life should represent? What is it that your life establishes as certainty for others? What is it that your life demonstrates? Is it about the fear of God, not only as the place to begin, but the place to end in life?
- a. *It goes without too much comment that what matters is how one lives with the guidance of God's word.*
8. *The most refreshing part of this whole study is the truth that "one can more than just survive in this crazy world," but that one can more than survive, but one can "thrive" by pursuing Godly wisdom. It can be done! God has a plan!*

The plan to *"more than survive in a crazy world"* begins with the concept of personifying a debate between two people, one who is wisdom and the other who is foolishness. The intent of this personification of wisdom as a person and foolishness as a person is to show that there needs to be an *end to this great debate*. Think of it this way: my life and your life are caught in this life changing debate daily. Depending on which one wins, foolishness or wisdom determined how well we survive in this crazy world.

**Illustration:** Life changing debates happen all around us, and we probably pay little attention to them because we do not see any relevance, or anything from which we'd immediately or even later benefit. Take for example the great debate about bringing extinct creatures back to life. While originally this is the



stuff that science fiction was made of, some recent developments have escalated the possibility that one day the woolly mammoth might return, or the pterodactyl or any other great dinosaur. There is a debate about this. Are you concerned? I would say most of us won't lose any sleep over this tonight. Or consider the debate about Climate Change. Is this real, or it is a political issue? We all have our ideas, and each one will have to decide if the debate is real or not. Weather patterns have changed, or have they? Is there enough evidence to validate or invalidate the premises of the debate? And, once more I ask the question, are you concerned?

There is a debate about which each of us should be concerned, and it is the life changing debate of **Proverbs 1:8-33. The debate is**

**which voice, which values, which directions will influence your life, not just today, but tomorrow and the rest of your life?** The great debate is between God's wisdom and



foolishness. Which voice will you listen to, which voice will guide your decisions in life... today, tomorrow, a week or even a year from now? While it sounds easy to settle this, for who would want to purposely follow the ways of foolishness, we know that it is many people we know choose foolishness on a regular basis. Let's look at the text, and as I (we) read through it, see the debate for people, and which voices will be heard and pursued.

**One Wins the Debate by Understanding the Ways of Foolishness:** (remember, it's as if wisdom is a person speaking, and this is what he says about foolishness).

**Proverbs 1:10-19 My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. 11 If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in wait for someone's blood, let's waylay some harmless soul; 12 let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit; 13 we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder; 14 throw in your lot with us, and we will share a common purse"-- 15 my son, do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; 16 for their feet rush into sin, they are swift to shed blood. 17 How useless to spread a net in full view of all the birds! 18 These men lie in wait for their own blood;**

**they waylay only themselves! 19 Such is the end of all who go after ill-gotten gain; it takes away the lives of those who get it.**

Let's talk about this: **Illustration:** No one ever said, **"I want to be an alcoholic or drug addict when I grow up."** Those are hard words, and even as I say those words, I need to apologize for those who have found themselves in such situations. The truth is, no one ever set out to destroy themselves, and that's what makes the debate so hard, and what makes this even more so important to listen to.

**One of the main ideas this guy wisdom speaks is to caution us to** be very careful who our friends are and what influence they have on our lives. As this text is read and re-read, over and over what pops up is this thing of influence. No one ever comes and says, "Hey become a murderer like us, or a thief, a drug addict, or an alcoholic." No, that's not what one hears at all. But let's hear his voice of wisdom speak and talk to us.

**What the Voice of Foolishness Says: Enticement: (vs 10) My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them.**

- Let's start with the idea that those who bring the enticement already have a track record of being among those who have **"missed the mark"** in some respect. While not wanting to be super critical of others, the casual observation is that the person bringing the enticement is already recognized as one who is lacking in integrity, known for being rebellious and anti-authority. The recognition of that person is a key that there should be a hesitation in what one is hearing or going to hear.
- **"if sinners entice"** and it should be just understood that **this isn't a one-time event**, but rather a continual tug to join in. The power of persuasion doesn't become valid over just one single invitation, but it takes several. We don't always hear the evil in it.

**ENTICEMENT**

- The invitation is given with what I can only call “**flattery.**” After all, how else can people be so easily convinced, unless somehow they are flattered, or presented with a level of what I can only call insincere praise. It’s really up to the person listening to the flatter to determine if there is any truth or just how much of an exaggeration what’s being said actually is.
- But the formula is all in place. Flattery is used to entice someone. The person doing the enticing is questionable, what’s being said is probably only partially true, but it’s how influence starts. **It was Hank Ketchum, creator of Dennis the Menace who said, “Flattery is like chewing gum. Enjoy it, but don’t swallow it.”**
- This is how the road to destruction begins. The Great Debate begins here with words that reach perhaps a hurting, lonely and desperate heart, enticing words.
- Enticed? It happens, but such is a tool for the Great Debate of foolishness.

**What the voice of Foolishness wants us to See: Envision: (11) If they say, "Come along with us; let's lie in wait for someone's blood, let's waylay some harmless soul;**

## envision

- The second “rung on the ladder” or place along the pathway is what I would call the envisioning part.
- Though the English translation doesn’t say it, there is the continuous repetition of the words, “**come along with us, come on...**” Again, not a single one time event, but the continual asking.
- Consider the game of “**role play,**” as if this is what’s going on here. The continual asking is illustrated with role playing, so that one can see himself in the situation, not as a failure, not as one defeated, but as one victorious, powerful, and strong. The concept of the role playing is enhanced because there are no losers among those who are teaming together.
  - And, we all know the value of being in a team. “**Come along with us!** Who we are together is more important than who you are alone.
  - That’s the envisioning part.



- We see this played out in the movies all the time, where the bad guys never consider that things will be as bad as they wind up being. While the bad guys typically are prepared for the awfulness of a situation, it always ends up being far worse than what was thought.
- No one is thinking they will get caught. The thrill of the moment is enticing, and the whole event is splashed in front of one's view as if it would all work out perfectly. The thought of **lying in wait for blood** may appear to be outlandish, but not being used is the word for murder. (Foolishly, we might think it means something other than murder, maybe something considered harmless).
  - We have a way of softening down the vocabulary so it doesn't appear so harsh. In fact, we have a whole new vocabulary when it comes to committing sin. One of the most common phrases now is that of a **"personal indiscretion."** While it is a sin, and probably a horrible sin, the impact is lessened with the words that make it appear more normal.
- This part of the debate is where the envisioning is about being strong, being forceful, being the one who is unstoppable. Such appeals to the ego, and the ego is always wanting to hear this kind of stuff.

**What the Voice of Foolishness wants us to Think: This is Easy. (12) let's swallow them alive, like the grave, and whole, like those who go down to the pit;**

- The place to begin here is to refer to some slang words. *Just about every language has them, for example: the Swedish idiom is: Det är ingen ko på isen, which literally translated means, There's no cow on the ice.* "There's no need to worry." Or 'There's no danger on the roof.' Or, The French idiom: Les carottes sont cuites! Literal translation: "The carrots are cooked!" What it means: "The situation can't be changed." It's bit like the phrase, "It's no use crying over spilt milk," in English.



<https://blog.ted.com/40-idioms-that-cant-be-translated-literally/comment-page-5/>

- **Let's swallow them alive** is that same kind of idiom. It's not about eating someone alive, though we do talk like that, it's about how easy something will be, like saying in your high school basketball days, "We'll eat our opponents alive." **What appears before you appears as if it is easy.**
- There is that sense that because it's so easy, it's almost as if you might be doing them a favor to take them down. Again, what's going on in the mind of those being enticed are a thousand thoughts running back and forth.
- Those who are opponents only appear to be worthy competitors, but in all reality, they are so much less.
- When someone is being enticed in the great debate, it's not typical to throw up in front of one just how difficult the situation might be. Rather, just the opposite, how easy it will be, like swallowing them alive! This is the language of persuasion.

**What the Voice of Foolishness wants us to Grasp: Enhanced phase. (13) we will get all sorts of valuable things and fill our houses with plunder;**

**ENHANCED**

- At issue in the Great Debate now is not how dangerous anything is but an actual downplaying of the act as if it's not all that serious. What matters most is the valuables that can be obtained.
- Literally, **it's not just we will seize**, but rather in an almost childlike way, **"we will find these riches**, as if the actual idea of the robbery is underplayed. It's but a switching of terminology again, only so that the intensity of the crime will not be seen.
- It's much as I said earlier: No one would enter this saying, **"I want to spend time in prison, I want to be executed and cause all kind of pain for others."** No one is expecting that and the language of the debate is all about lessening the horrible facts of what will take place.
- What's at stake is what's important. The result is well worth all the effort put forward. Not mentioned at all is the idea if one will feel any sense of

guilt for taking what is not his, no sense of justice enters into this kind of debate, but rather the idea of how more deserving they are for doing this robbery and murder.

- ***This is much like the old saying, “I deserve this because I’ve been so overlooked in life, this is my opportunity to even the score.”***
  - In some terms, it would be called ***“social justice,”*** to take from those who have and place it in the hands of those who deserve.
  - There’s no arguing if it’s right or wrong, only the desire of the heart is what matters. (Note this: it’s not about what’s right or wrong, but what one wants. One will find the justification and sooth his conscience accordingly because of how enhanced things appear.
- The Great Debate is about grasping how things really need to be.

**What the Voice of Foolishness wants us to Feel: Encouragement Phase. (14)**  
***throw in your lot with us, and we will share a common purse”—***

- Not to be outdone, we again need to understand that ***the conversation has been continuous, as if over and over*** the thrill of the conquest is envisioned and now encouraged. It is as if one could not be who he needs to be without joining in with the crowd on their journey of destruction.
- Again, ***no mention if things go wrong, no mention of the guilt, no mention of the harm and overwhelming damage that will be done to those assaulted, just the encouragement*** as if one’s life will not be complete without participating.
- Encouragement is all that is needed for one to cross the line and become a participant.
  - Take the whole issue of what are known as gateway drugs, marijuana, alcohol and nicotine. All are accessible and illustrated every day as being good, pleasurable, and just about everyone is encouraged to use them. The power of encouragement is strong... the media throws this in front of us all the time.

**Encouragement**

- Carefully noted is the upfront fact that all will share in the common purse, as if equally. (We know this is not how it usually works out. Criminals typically do not divide their conquest equally.) Yet, that's the proposal.
- The words are said with excitement, enthusiasm, and a sense of power, and how incomplete one would be if he were to walk away.

**What makes foolishness so appealing?** If everything I've just said makes lots and lots of sense, why in the world would anyone pursue foolishness as a way to live? Perhaps the best answer for that is from **Proverbs 9:13**, where foolishness is like a person:

## THE APPEAL OF

## FOOLISHNESS

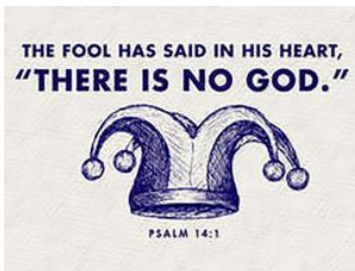
- She appeals to your passions and impulses.
- She tells you what you want to hear, not what you need to hear.
- She invites you to act without thinking.
- She exaggerates and sensationalizes.
- She seeks to deceive you with attractive lies.

<https://www.acalltoexcellence.com/the-deceit-of-foolishness>

1. Before we go any further, let's just stop here and recognize the power foolishness uses in the debate for one's life.
  - a. **None of this is presented in a negative light.** None of it is seen as being self-destructive, but just the opposite. The person being enticed has only to gain..
2. This whole sequence isn't limited to the discussion of murder and stealing, but is easily **adapated to life's situations**.
  - a. For a child, it may not be about robbery or theft to begin with, but just simply to do that which is wrong. The enticement is coercive, as if one will not get caught, so why not venture.
  - b. That which is envisioned might be that from cheating on a test, one will get a passing grade, and by getting a passing grade, one will get the

attention he so desperately wants, so that he can be seen as an achiever.

- c. Cheating on a test is easy. He's heard others do it and not get caught. Even though others may not have exhibited much skill, this one has skill and will not get caught.
  - d. By getting a better grade on a test, or getting something through theft, life will be better, even if it is only momentary. What is valuable is worth the risk.
  - e. And the encouragement, that **"everyone is doing it,"** there are no innocent people, so why not become one of the crowd and just belong.
3. While losing the debate, one thinks he has won.



- a. Proverbs will address this in several verses. **Proverbs 12:15 says, "the way of a fool seems right to him..."**  
**Proverbs 26:12, "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him!"**
- b. The debate for one's life is lost, and he's too foolish to know it!

### **One Wins the Debate by Avoiding the Avoidable.**

**Illustration:** When I was in high school, cars were different than they are today... they were much cheaper, and the issues for safety were not nearly as dramatic as they are today. Now why I'm telling you this is I want to tell you about a friend of mine by the name of Larry. Larry was a couple years behind me in high school. Larry bought what we would typically today call a "junker" car. A "junker" car was something that ran, and that's about the most one could say about it. Larry had a plan though. His plan was to go into town on the weekends looking for places where he could be the victim of an accident. He was literally an accident looking for a place to happen. Since high school kids were often noted for not driving real well, and often doing crazy things, he knew that there would be, on the average Friday-Saturday night, any number of teenagers driving recklessly. His plan was to position himself in an unavoidable place where a fender bender could occur. Then,



**ACCIDENT**



because most high school kids didn't want a ticket or even to be caught causing an accident, he would offer for them to pay him a 'cash' settlement, which many gladly paid. Larry was someone to avoid, and so avoiding the avoidable danger was something I specifically was aware of, and would just not go near him.

This idea of avoiding the avoidable is the second thing the voice of wisdom talks about, and I'm going to condense it into categories.

1. **Avoid the Avoidable: Making Poor Choices. Proverbs 1:22 "How long will you simple ones love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge?"**

Note the **three kinds of people**: the **simpleton** (who is easily misled), the **mockers** (the one who is cynical and abusive), and **the fool who hates knowledge** (his life has already demonstrated that). These three kinds of people, while one might consider them just plain ordinary people, have earned the titles of simpleton, mocker and fool **because of their poor choices and decisions.**



- i. We might not like names/titles like this, but it's about identifying the problem, identifying what's going on. It's being truthful, and not intended to be name calling. The names identify the problem.
  - b. We might want to look past that and only see the people, and not connect the results of poor choices and poor decisions. We might want to minimize those results, ignore them, pretend they aren't as bad as they are, but in all reality, the voice of wisdom says the results were avoidable had better choices been made.
  - c. Here's our problem: **To disconnect one from his/her poor choices is not helping that person to ever climb out of their misery** (even if they don't see where they are as an awful place). Failure on our part to connect one's poor decisions with the results is but a lie that is being whitewashed.

- d. Perhaps one of the greatest ways to **“more than survive in a crazy world”** is to acknowledge and connect the results of poor choices with poor results, even though we don’t want to do this for our friends.



- i. We don’t want to hurt them, but Proverbs has an answer for that: **Proverbs 27:6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.** One of the most honest things we might do is to identify what’s going on.

- e. The goal of the voice of wisdom is to connect the poor choices with their results. **It’s not about demeaning anyone, or destroying a person, but about the debate of the importance of wisdom.**

- i. The results of foolish decisions can be avoided, and that’s perhaps a hard statement. On the website, [www.LifeHope&Truth.com](http://www.LifeHope&Truth.com) are listed **5 foolish things we (and others) do to foul up our future.** Let me list what is suggested.

1. We follow wrong things, we blow up and become angry, we start a bad habit, we believe lies, and we commit to something we shouldn’t.
2. Could the results of those bad decisions have been avoided? The answer is simply, **“yes.”**

- f. The counsel of Proverbs is to avoid the avoidable which comes with poor choices. Don’t’ make poor choices.

2. **Avoid the Avoidable: Pain and Guilt Proverbs 1:23-32 If you had responded to my rebuke, I would have poured out my heart to you and made my thoughts known to you. 24 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, 25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you-- 27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind, when distress and trouble overwhelm you. 28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me. 29 Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD, 30 since they would not accept my advice**

**and spurned my rebuke, 31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. 32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;**

- a. **Illustration:** Several years ago, some of my cousins became involved in drugs. One cousin was a severe addict. While I'm not sure how it all took place, somehow he was either stealing from his sister's home, or somehow wound up in the basement of her home. No one seemed to know that he was there. He somehow, probably in the midst of getting his drugs set up, struck a match, starting a small fire. He left the house after getting his fix, and just went on his way. Shortly thereafter, the house became engulfed in flames. My cousin and her family were in the house, and all 5 died that day. Later, maybe the next day or two, when my cousin found out that his drug problem was directly related to the death of 5 people whom he knew and loved, he hung himself. He couldn't handle the guilt, the pain, the devastation of what his life had become.
- b. **Guilt and pain are the results of poor choices.** Pain is a great teacher. Painful experiences have so much to teach us. Pain implies that something is wrong with our lives. Pain shows us that we need to take action in order to change how we live — to stop doing some things and start doing some other ones. <https://theunboundedspirit.com/pain-is-your-best-teacher/> Whether we will listen to the pain is another issue though.
- i. All too often we hear the words, **“What did I do to deserve this, as one endures great pain?”** **None, or maybe only a few of us will answer that,** but in all reality, we know. Often times, poor decisions and poor lifestyles that were full of rebellion against God and His word would be the answer to “what did I do to deserve this?”.
- ii. **It sounds judgmental to talk like this,** and I'm not suggesting we go out and talk like this to everyone we meet. But, how often has personal disregard for truth, for that which is right been avoided, compromised or dealt with in ways that are undeserving?



- iii. Instead of asking, **“What did I do to deserve this”** would one actually be ready to confess the sins that made the pain and guilt possible? Who could have considered the possibility that such pain would be this hard?
- c. Perhaps the difficult part of the guilt and pain that was avoidable come from these verses: **31 they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes. 32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them;**
  - i. Literally, they will saturate themselves, as if gluttons on the fruit of their ways, and be more than filled with the fruit of their schemes. The difficulty is that those who dwell in sin probably won't see the same things we do as we look at them and reflect on the results. Or they will excuse it away.
  - ii. That's a lot like how it is with children. Children often times do not see the connection between the behavior they have exhibited and the results which they have. **Illustration: It's just part of how we think. We can literally deceive ourselves into believing that none of what we experience is our fault.**
  - iii. **I'll not labor this point a lot more other than to say that the deeper one goes into a life of sin, the harder it is for one to come out.** I'm sure we've all heard the term, **“you've got to hit rock bottom before you can look up.”** Here's one guy's take on that statement **and why eating the fruit of one's bad decisions may be the best thing that can happen to help one turn around.**
    - 1. At the bottom,  
you realise just  
how far off course  
you were, and  
that your life choices were simply not sustainable.
    - 2. At the bottom, all your dysfunctional behaviours are finally revealed

**rock bottom (noun)**

**the lowest possible level in life**

3. Hitting rock bottom is the beginning of questioning everything that you've ever thought to be true.
  4. At the bottom, your disempowering patterns and behaviours become glaringly obvious, and the triggers that kept you repeating those behaviour patterns come into sharp focus
  5. You realise at the bottom that you were, in fact, not where you thought you were in life.
  6. You gain humility. You see that life is not black and white and that you don't know everything.
  7. You gain compassion. You understand what it's like for people in the depths of despair, shame, guilt, and fear.
  8. You're able to let go of everything because nothing is working anyway!
  9. After you've hit the bricks, you—perhaps for the first time—begin to accept full responsibility for all the outcomes in your life.
  10. The good news is, once you've hit rock bottom, you know you can't possibly go any lower. You realise the bottom is actually a great springboard from which to push yourself up to the surface
- <https://dailygreatness.co/blogs/be-your-own-guru/52291205-12-reasons-why-hitting-rock-bottom-is-the-best-thing-that-can-ever-happen-to-you>

iv. It's a hard place to be, and it's an all-consuming place!

d. **Could this be avoided? Yes.**

**One Wins the Debate by Pursuing that which should be Pursued Proverbs 1:33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm."**

1. Let me conclude with this verse, for in this verse is the answer to the great debate of wisdom and foolishness, as well as the answer on how to more than survive in a crazy world.





- a. *The answer is to listen and pursue that which should be pursued. Continue listening not just to hear, but to know and do. Listening is as much a description of how you live as it is where you live.* Did you get that? Listening intently to learn, listening to grow, listening to understand.
- i. Listening can also, in this case, involve, listening to be healed, listening to have questions answered, listening to have counsel, listening to have guidance.
- b. To end the debate in your life between foolishness and wisdom is pursue that which should be pursued. Jesus put it this way: **put into practice what you hear from him.**
- i. **Matthew 7:24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."**



**Conclusion:** In the judicial system there is a term known as **recidivism**, which essentially refers to one's "relapse" back into criminal behavior, often after a person has already spent time in prison/jail. There have been a lot of studies done on recidivism, and the debate continues why people commit crimes and go back into prison. **In the State of Indiana, 1 out of every 3 prisoners will return to prison after being released.** That's a horrifying statistic, but yet



it illustrates what Proverbs says. The debate over living foolishly or with wisdom needs to be answered, on a personal level, every day. *I find it ironic that most of the prisons in Indiana are known as “correctional” facilities. Do they really correct one’s life, or is there something else going on... like what’s in one’s heart? I think we can answer that.*

**Question:**

1. We want to “more than survive in this crazy world,” so how will we know we are listening more to the voice of the Wisdom of God than the voice of foolishness?
2. What are some areas of life we need to avoid so that we can avoid that which will bring pain, suffering, and consequences?
3. What do we need to do because Jesus is Lord, and bids us to be doers of what we hear?

