

Ecclesiastes 10:1-20
Foolish and Wise Works Contrasted
Mystery must not prevent appropriate human effort—9:11-11:6
Removing Discouragements to God's Plan—8:16-12:14

- 1) Understand the value of being soberminded—10:1-4
 - a) Regarding fools—10:1-3 ¹ *Dead flies make a perfumer's ointment stink, so a little foolishness is weightier (has more influence) than wisdom and honor.* ² *A wise man's heart goes toward the right (protection), but a fool's heart toward the left (leaves him vulnerable).* ³ *Even when the fool walks on the road he lacks sense, and he says to everyone that he is a fool. (his reputation as a fool is known by all)*
 - b) Regarding rulers—10:4 ⁴ *If the spirit of the ruler rises against you, do not abandon (give rest to) your position, because composure causes great sins to rest.*

- 2) Remember the influence of foolishness—10:5-15
 - a) Government officials sometimes make bad judgments—10:5 ⁵ *There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, like an error proceeding from the ruler.*
 - b) Inappropriate honor for the fool—10:6-7 ⁶ *Folly is set in many high places, while the rich sit in the low place.* ⁷ *I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking on the ground like slaves.*
 - c) Wisely avoid potential risk—10:8-11 ⁸ *He who digs a pit may fall into it, and a snake may bite the one who breaks through a wall.* ⁹ *The one who quarries stones may be hurt by them, and the one who splits logs may be endangered by them.* ¹⁰ *If the iron axe is dull and one does not sharpen its edge, he must exert more strength; however, wisdom has the advantage of giving success.* ¹¹ *If the serpent bites before it is charmed, there is no advantage for the charmer.*
 - d) The unteachable fool—10:12-15 ¹² *The words of a wise man are gracious, but the lips of a fool consume him.* ¹³ *The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly and the end of his talk is evil madness.* ¹⁴ *Yet the fool multiplies words. No man knows what will happen, and who can tell him what will be after him?* ¹⁵ *The toil of the fools wearies him, for he does not know how to go to a city.*

- 3) Respond wisely to foolish government—10:16-20
 - a) Contrasts—10:16-17
 - i) ¹⁶ *Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child and your princes feast in the morning.*
 - ii) ¹⁷ *Blessed are you, O land, when your king is the son of nobles, and your princes feast at the proper time—for strength and not for drunkenness.*
 - b) Illustrations of foolishness—10:18-19
 - i) Laziness—¹⁸ *Through extreme laziness the roof beams sag, and through the lowering of the hands the house leaks.*
 - ii) Priorities—¹⁹ *They prepare bread for laughter, and wine gladdens life, and money is the answer to everything.*
 - c) Be soberminded in your speech concerning the government—10:20 ²⁰ *Moreover do not curse the king even in your thought (cf. Exodus 22:28; Romans 13:1-7; 1st Timothy 2:1-2; 1st Peter 2:13-17), and do not curse the rich in your bedroom; for a bird of the air might carry the sound, or some winged creature might report the matter. (i.e. “a little bird told me ...”)*